

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
MATTHEW ARNOLD



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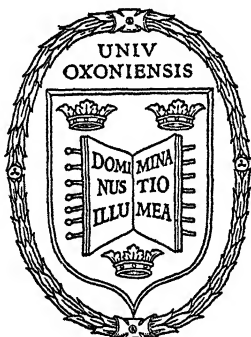
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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
MATTHEW ARNOLD

Edited by
C. B. TINKER *and* H. F. LOWRY



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MATTHEW ARNOLD

BORN, LALEHAM
DIED, LIVERPOOL

24 DECEMBER 1822
15 APRIL 1888

The Poems of Matthew Arnold, 1840 to 1867 were first included in the series of Oxford Standard Authors in 1909 and reprinted seven times. In 1942 a new edition included the poems published by Arnold since 1868, and this edition was reprinted in 1945. The present edition, first published in 1950, supersedes those mentioned above and contains Arnold's complete poetical works. It was reprinted in 1953, 1957, and 1961.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

EDITORS' PREFACE

THE classification and order of the poems in this edition are those of the Library Edition of 1888, the last which could have had the advantage of the poet's arrangement of the material in it. Two poems, 'Horatian Echo' and 'Kaiser Dead', though printed in magazines during the poet's lifetime, were not included among the collected poems until the Popular Edition of 1890. To this final collection, the text of which is in general followed here, we have added the ten cancelled poems which the author excluded from his works, and the prefaces of 1853 and 1854 on the nature of poetry. A few verses never printed by Arnold himself may be found in *The Poetry of Matthew Arnold: A Commentary*, published by the present editors in 1940 (at pp. 335 ff, preceded by his translations from Homer at p. 329).

We had hoped that publication of the *Commentary* might bring news of additional unprinted manuscripts before the publishing of the edition of the poems themselves. In this hope we have been disappointed. Our search, since 1940, for such manuscripts has been almost entirely fruitless. It seems incredible that more should not have survived. Two of the printed editions, however, containing alterations in the poet's hand, have been discovered and used: the edition of 1854, given to the author's young son, Thomas, and the edition of 1881, later presented to John Singer Sargent by Lady Sandhurst.

We have printed Arnold's explanatory notes in their original form. He was somewhat free in his abridgement of the quotations of which he made use. For a more extended account of his sources, our *Commentary* may be consulted (e.g. pp. 109 ff and 205 ff).

The footnotes are intended to supply a full record of the successive alterations of the text from the manuscripts (when such are known) onwards through the various editions. Changes of spelling are recorded, but not the alterations in punctuation to which Arnold was addicted. To have included a complete enumeration of these successive changes (the reasons for which it is often difficult to discover) would have burdened our pages with footnotes which

EDITORS' PREFACE

would have confused the general reader and have been of use to few or none who might consult them

Once again we must acknowledge the generosity of Mr Arnold Whitridge, who has permitted us to make full use of the material in his possession and to reprint such portions of it as were necessary to this edition. To the museums at Grasmere and Keswick we have elsewhere expressed our indebtedness, to Mrs Norman Thwaites, and to the many friends and scholars who have helped us by criticism and suggestion. For assistance in the preparation of this volume we are indebted to Mr Curt N Taylor and, particularly, to the skill and extensive knowledge of Mr Frederick Page, of the Oxford University Press.

October 1949

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VOLUMES OF POETRY PUBLISHED BY ARNOLD

(A list of the poems in each of the editions specified below is given in
Thomas B Smart, *The Bibliography of Matthew Arnold*, London, 1892)

THE STRAYED REVELLER 1849

The / Strayed Reveller, / and / Other Poems / By A / London / B Fellowes,
Ludgate Street / 1849

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA 1852

Empedocles on Etna, / and / Other Poems. / By A / London / B Fellowes,
Ludgate Street. / 1852.

POEMS 1853

Poems / By / Matthew Arnold / A New Edition. / London / Longman,
Brown, Green, and Longmans / MDCCCLIII

Second Edition 1854

Poems / By / Matthew Arnold / Second Edition / London / Longman,
Brown, Green, and Longmans / MDCCCLIV

Third Edition 1857

Poems / By / Matthew Arnold / Third Edition / London Longman,
Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts / 1857

POEMS *Second Series* 1855

Poems / By / Matthew Arnold / Second Series / London / Longman, Brown,
Green, and Longmans / MDCCCLV

MEROPE 1858

Merope / A Tragedy / By / Matthew Arnold / London / Longman, Brown,
Green, Longmans, & Roberts / MDCCCLVIII

NEW POEMS 1867

New Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / London / Macmillan and Co / MDCCCLXVII

Second Edition 1868

New Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / Second Edition / London / Macmillan
and Co. / MDCCCLXVIII

VOLUMES OF POETRY PUBLISHED BY ARNOLD

POEMS 1869

(*Two Volumes*)

Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / the First Volume / Narrative and Elegiac
Poems / London / Macmillan and Co / MDCCCLXIX [*All rights reserved*]

Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / the Second Volume / Dramatic and Lyric
Poems / [*&c, as above*]

POEMS 1877

(*Two volumes*)

Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / the First Volume / Early Poems, Narrative
Poems, / and Sonnets / New and Complete Edition / London / Macmillan
and Co / MDCCCLXXVII

Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / the Second Volume / Lyric, Dramatic, and
Elegiac Poems / [*&c, as above*]

New Edition 1881

(This edition agrees, in the main, with the edition of 1877 For differences
between the two editions, see Smart, p 10)

POEMS 1885

(*Library Edition*)

VOL I

Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / Early Poems, Narrative Poems / and Sonnets /
London / Macmillan and Co / 1885

VOL II

Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / Lyric and Elegiac Poems / London / Mac-
millan and Co / 1885

VOL III

Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / Dramatic and Later Poems / London / Mac-
millan and Co / 1885

New Edition 1888

Poems / by / Matthew Arnold / Early Poems, Narrative Poems / and Sonnets /
London / Macmillan and Co / and New York / 1888 / *All rights reserved*
[Vol. II 'Lyric and Elegiac Poems', Vol. III 'Dramatic and Later Poems']

POETICAL WORKS 1890

(*Popular Edition*)

Poetical Works / of / Matthew Arnold / London / Macmillan and Co / and
New York / 1890 / *All rights reserved*

(Contains 'Horatian Echo' and 'Kaiser Dead', which, though appearing
in periodicals, had not been included in any of the above editions)

VOLUMES OF POETRY PUBLISHED BY ARNOLD

(*Selections*)

SELECTED POEMS 1878

Selected Poems / of / Matthew Arnold / [*Vignette*] / London / Macmillan and Co / 1878

(A new edition of the *Selected Poems* was printed in October 1878
Reprinted 1880, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, May and September 1888, and 1889)

(*Publication of Prize Poems*)

Alaric at Rome. / A prize poem, / recited in Rugby School, / June XII, MDCCCXL / [*Arms of the School.*] / Rugby Combe and Crossley / MDCCCXL

Cromwell / a prize poem, / recited in the Theatre, Oxford, / June 28, 1843 / By / Matthew Arnold, / Balliol College / [*Arms of Oxford*] / Oxford / Printed and published by J Vincent / MDCCCXLIII

(A second edition of *Cromwell* was reprinted by T & G Shrimpton, Broad Street, Oxford, in 1863, and the poem was also included in *Oxford Prize Poems*, 1846, published by J H Parker, J Vincent, and H Slatter)

LIST OF KNOWN MANUSCRIPTS OF ARNOLD'S POEMS

(Alphabetically arranged, according to titles used in this edition. For the distinction between the terms Yale Manuscript and Yale Papers see Tinker & Lowry, *The Poetry of Matthew Arnold, A Commentary*, pp. 8-10.)

- Calais Sands* (in the possession of Arnold Whitridge, Esq.)
Caution to Poets, A (Yale Manuscript. Fair copy in Arnold's letters to Clough)
Dover Beach (draft of 22 lines only, formerly in the collection of Thomas A. Wise. Now British Museum?)
Empedocles on Etna (two stanzas only, not used in printed poem. Yale Manuscript. MS of three stanzas (Act I, Scene II, ll. 397-411). Arnold's papers, in possession of Mrs. Norman Thwaites)
Faded Leaves ('Longing' and 'Too Late' only. Arnold Whitridge, Esq.)
Geist's Grave (in the possession of Arthur Houghton, Esq.)
Haworth Churchyard (fair copies of lines 48-54 and 66-71 only. Yale Papers)
Horatian Echo (Yale Papers)
Kaiser Dead (British Red Cross Sale, at Christie's, April 1918)
Lines written in Kensington Gardens (Yale Manuscript)
Memorial Verses, 1850 (Yale Papers)
New Rome (Arnold's diary for 1873)
Persistency of Poetry (fair copy in Arnold's note-book for 1867)
Philomela (written on the fly-leaf of a copy of Latham's *English Language*, London, 1848, in the possession of the Reverend Roger Wodehouse)
Question, A (fair copy of the first seven lines in 'Dora Wordsworth, her Book')
Rugby Chapel (Yale Papers)
Second Best, The (Yale Manuscript)
Shakespeare (British Museum)
Sohrab and Rustum (three portions only preserved: (1) lines 1-108 in the museum at Dove Cottage, Grasmere, (2) lines 109-467 in the possession of Arnold Whitridge, Esq., (3) lines 468-524 in the Keswick Museum)
Stagirius (Yale Papers)
Stanzas from Carnac (in a journal of Mrs. Thomas Arnold, the poet's mother, now in the possession of Miss Dorothy Ward)
Stanzas in Memory of Edward Quillinan (Rotha Quillinan's album)
Terrace at Berne, The (four lines only, a revision of stanza 12, never adopted, Yale Papers)
Tristram and Iseult (a portion of Part III only, a draft of the first 63 lines. Yale Manuscript)
World's Triumphs, The (written on the inside front cover of Eckermann's *Gesprache mit Goethe*, vol. III, Magdeburg, 1848, in the possession of Arnold Whitridge, Esq.)
Written in Emerson's Essays (Yale Manuscript)
Youth and Calm (Rotha Quillinan's album)

PREFACE

[First published 1853 Reprinted 1854 and 1857]

IN two small volumes of Poems, published anonymously, one in 1849, the other in 1852, many of the Poems which compose the present volume have already appeared. The rest are now published for the first time.

I have, in the present collection, omitted the Poem from which the volume published in 1852 took its title. I have done so, not because the subject of it was a Sicilian Greek born between two and three thousand years ago, although many persons would think this a sufficient reason. Neither have I done so because I had, in my own opinion, failed in the delineation which I intended to effect. I intended to delineate the feelings of one of the last of the Greek religious philosophers, one of the family of Orpheus and Musaeus, having survived his fellows, living on into a time when the habits of Greek thought and feeling had begun fast to change, character to dwindle, the influence of the Sophists to prevail. Into the feelings of a man so situated there entered much that we are accustomed to consider as exclusively modern, how much, the fragments of Empedocles himself which remain to us are sufficient at least to indicate. What those who are familiar only with the great monuments of early Greek genius suppose to be its exclusive characteristics, have disappeared, the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity have disappeared. the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced, modern problems have presented themselves, we hear already the doubts, we witness the discouragement, of Hamlet and of Faust.

The representation of such a man's feelings must be interesting, if consistently drawn. We all naturally take pleasure, says Aristotle, in any imitation or representation whatever. This is the basis of our love of Poetry and we take pleasure in them, he adds, because all knowledge is naturally agreeable to us, not to the philosopher only, but to mankind at large. Every representation therefore which is consistently drawn may be supposed to be interesting.

Title] Preface to the First Edition 1854

PREFACE

inasmuch as it gratifies this natural interest in knowledge of all kinds. What is *not* interesting, is that which does not add to our knowledge of any kind, that which is vaguely conceived and loosely drawn, a representation which is general, indeterminate, 5 and faint, instead of being particular, precise, and firm

Any accurate representation may therefore be expected to be interesting, but, if the representation be a poetical one, more than this is demanded. It is demanded, not only that it shall interest, but also that it shall inspire and rejoice the reader that it shall convey 10 a charm, and infuse delight. For the Muses, as Hesiod says, were born that they might be 'a forgetfulness of evils, and a truce from cares' and it is not enough that the Poet should add to the knowledge of men, it is required of him also that he should add to their happiness. 'All Art,' says Schiller, 'is dedicated to Joy, and there is no 15 higher and no more serious problem, than how to make men happy. The right Art is that alone, which creates the highest enjoyment.'

A poetical work, therefore, is not yet justified when it has been shown to be an accurate, and therefore interesting representation, it has to be shown also that it is a representation from which men 20 can derive enjoyment. In presence of the most tragic circumstances, represented in a work of Art, the feeling of enjoyment, as is well known, may still subsist. The representation of the most utter calamity, of the liveliest anguish, is not sufficient to destroy it. The more tragic the situation, the deeper becomes the enjoyment, 25 and the situation is more tragic in proportion as it becomes more terrible.

What then are the situations, from the representation of which, though accurate, no poetical enjoyment can be derived? They are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action, in which a 30 continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance, in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous. When they occur in actual life, they are painful, not tragic, 35 the representation of them in poetry is painful also.

To this class of situations, poetically faulty as it appears to me, that of Empedocles, as I have endeavoured to represent him,

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belongs, and I have therefore excluded the Poem from the present collection

And why, it may be asked, have I entered into this explanation respecting a matter so unimportant as the admission or exclusion of the Poem in question? I have done so, because I was anxious to avow that the sole reason for its exclusion was that which has been stated above, and that it has not been excluded in deference to the opinion which many critics of the present day appear to entertain against subjects chosen from distant times and countries against the choice, in short, of any subjects but modern ones 10

'The Poet,' it is said,¹ and by an intelligent critic, 'the Poet who would really fix the public attention must leave the exhausted past, and draw his subjects from matters of present import, and *therefore* both of interest and novelty'

Now this view I believe to be completely false. It is worth 15 examining, inasmuch as it is a fair sample of a class of critical dicta everywhere current at the present day, having a philosophical form and air, but no real basis in fact, and which are calculated to vitiate the judgement of readers of poetry, while they exert, so far as they are adopted, a misleading influence on the practice of those who 20 write it

What are the eternal objects of Poetry, among all nations and at all times? They are actions, human actions, possessing an inherent interest in themselves, and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the Poet. Vainly will the 25 latter imagine that he has everything in his own power, that he can make an intrinsically inferior action equally delightful with a more excellent one by his treatment of it, he may indeed compel us to admire his skill, but his work will possess, within itself, an incurable defect 30

The Poet, then, has in the first place to select an excellent action, and what actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race,

¹ In *The Spectator* of April 2nd, 1853. The words quoted were not used with reference to poems of mine 1854 first

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and which are independent of time. These feelings are permanent and the same, that which interests them is permanent and the same also. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation, this
5 depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our nature, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting, and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion. A great human action of a thousand years ago is more interesting to it than a smaller human action of to-day, even
10 though upon the representation of this last the most consummate skill may have been expended, and though it has the advantage of appealing by its modern language, familiar manners, and contemporary allusions, to all our transient feelings and interests. These, however, have no right to demand of a poetical work that
15 it shall satisfy them, their claims are to be directed elsewhere. Poetical works belong to the domain of our permanent passions; let them interest these, and the voice of all subordinate claims upon them is at once silenced.

Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra, Dido—what modern poem
20 presents personages as interesting, even to us moderns, as these personages of an 'exhausted past'? We have the domestic epic dealing with the details of modern life which pass daily under our eyes, we have poems representing modern personages in contact with the problems of modern life, moral, intellectual, and social,
25 these works have been produced by poets the most distinguished of their nation and time, yet I fearlessly assert that Hermann and Dorothea, Childe Harold, Jocelyn, The Excursion, leave the reader cold in comparison with the effect produced upon him by the latter books of the *Iliad*, by the *Oresteia*, or by the episode of Dido. And
30 why is this? Simply because in the three last-named cases the action is greater, the personages nobler, the situations more intense, and this is the true basis of the interest in a poetical work, and this alone.

It may be urged, however, that past actions may be interesting in themselves, but that they are not to be adopted by the modern
35 Poet, because it is impossible for him to have them clearly present to his own mind, and he cannot therefore feel them deeply, nor

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represent them forcibly But this is not necessarily the case The externals of a past action, indeed, he cannot know with the precision of a contemporary, but his business is with its essentials The outward man of Oedipus or of Macbeth, the houses in which they lived, the ceremonies of their courts, he cannot accurately figure to himself, but neither do they essentially concern him His business is with their inward man, with their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic situations, which engage their passions as men, these have in them nothing local and casual, they are as accessible to the modern Poet as to a contemporary 10

The date of an action, then, signifies nothing the action itself, its selection and construction, this is what is all-important This the Greeks understood far more clearly than we do The radical difference between their poetical theory and ours consists, as it appears to me, in this that, with them, the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration, with us, attention is fixed mainly on the value of the separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action They regarded the whole, we regard the parts With them, the action predominated over the expression of it, with us, the expression predominates over the action Not that they failed in expression, or were inattentive to it, on the contrary, they are the highest models of expression, the unapproached masters of the *grand style* but their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably kept in its right degree of prominence, because it is so simple and so well subordinated, because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys For what reason was the Greek tragic poet confined to so limited a range of subjects? Because there are so few actions which unite in themselves, in the highest degree, the conditions of excellence and it was not thought that on any but an excellent subject could an excellent Poem be constructed A few actions, therefore, eminently adapted for tragedy, maintained almost exclusive possession of the Greek tragic stage, their significance appeared inexhaustible, they were as permanent problems, perpetually offered to the genius of every fresh poet. This too is the reason of what appears to us moderns a certain baldness of expression in Greek tragedy, of the triviality with which we often 30 35

PREFACE

reproach the remarks of the chorus, where it takes part in the dialogue that the action itself, the situation of Orestes, or Merope, or Alcmaeon, was to stand the central point of interest, unforgotten, absorbing, principal, that no accessories were for a moment to distract the spectator's attention from this, that the tone of the parts was to be perpetually kept down, in order not to impair the grandiose effect of the whole. The terrible old mythic story on which the drama was founded stood, before he entered the theatre, traced in its bare outlines upon the spectator's mind, it stood in his
10 memory, as a group of statuary, faintly seen, at the end of a long and dark vista. Then came the Poet, embodying outlines, developing situations, not a word wasted, not a sentiment capriciously thrown in stroke upon stroke, the drama proceeded the light deepened upon the group, more and more it revealed itself to the
15 rivetted gaze of the spectator until at last, when the final words were spoken, it stood before him in broad sunlight, a model of immortal beauty.

This was what a Greek critic demanded, this was what a Greek poet endeavoured to effect. It signified nothing to what time an
20 action belonged, we do not find that the Persae occupied a particularly high rank among the dramas of Aeschylus, because it represented a matter of contemporary interest. This was not what a cultivated Athenian required, he required that the permanent elements of his nature should be moved, and dramas of which the
25 action, though taken from a long-distant mythic time, yet was calculated to accomplish this in a higher degree than that of the Persae, stood higher in his estimation accordingly. The Greeks felt, no doubt, with their exquisite sagacity of taste, that an action of present times was too near them, too much mixed up with what
30 was accidental and passing, to form a sufficiently grand, detached, and self-subsistent object for a tragic poem. Such objects belonged to the domain of the comic poet, and of the lighter kinds of poetry. For the more serious kinds, for *pragmatic* poetry, to use an excellent expression of Polybius, they were more difficult and severe in the
35 range of subjects which they permitted. Their theory and practice

35 1853 inserts after permitted, and omits below, the sentence 'But for all kinds of poetry alike careful construction of the poem.'

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alike, the admirable treatise of Aristotle, and the unrivalled works of their poets, exclaim with a thousand tongues—'All depends upon the subject, choose a fitting action, penetrate yourself with the feeling of its situations, this done, everything else will follow'

But for all kinds of poetry alike there was one point on which, they were rigidly exacting, the adaptability of the subject to the kind of poetry selected, and the careful construction of the poem

How different a way of thinking from this is ours! We can hardly at the present day understand what Menander meant, when he told a man who inquired as to the progress of his comedy that he had finished it, not having yet written a single line, because he had constructed the action of it in his mind. A modern critic would have assured him that the merit of his piece depended on the brilliant things which arose under his pen as he went along. We have poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages, not for the sake of producing any total-impression. We have critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions, to the language about the action, not to the action itself. I verily think that the majority of them do not in their hearts believe that there is such a thing as a total-impression to be derived from a poem at all, or to be demanded from a poet, they think the term a common-place of metaphysical criticism. They will permit the Poet to select any action he pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will, provided he gratifies them with occasional bursts of fine writing, and with a shower of isolated thoughts and images. That is, they permit him to leave their poetical sense ungratified, provided that he gratifies their rhetorical sense and their curiosity. Of his neglecting to gratify these, there is little danger, he needs rather to be warned against the danger of attempting to gratify these alone, he needs rather to be perpetually reminded to prefer his action to everything else, so to treat this, as to permit its inherent excellences to develop themselves, without interruption from the intrusion of his personal peculiarities. most fortunate, when he most entirely succeeds in effacing himself, and in enabling a noble action to subsist as it did in nature.

But the modern critic not only permits a false practice, he

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- absolutely prescribes false aims — 'A true allegory of the state of one's own mind in a representative history,' the Poet is told, 'is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry' — And accordingly he attempts it An allegory of the state of one's
5 own mind, the highest problem of an art which imitates actions! No assuredly, it is not, it never can be so no great poetical work has ever been produced with such an aim Faust itself, in which something of the kind is attempted, wonderful passages as it contains, and in spite of the unsurpassed beauty of the scenes which
10 relate to Margaret, Faust itself, judged as a whole, and judged strictly as a poetical work, is defective its illustrious author, the greatest poet of modern times, the greatest critic of all times, would have been the first to acknowledge it, he only defended his work, indeed, by asserting it to be 'something incommensurable'
- 15 The confusion of the present times is great, the multitude of voices counselling different things bewildering, the number of existing works capable of attracting a young writer's attention and of becoming his models, immense what he wants is a hand to guide him through the confusion, a voice to prescribe to him the aim
20 which he should keep in view, and to explain to him that the value of the literary works which offer themselves to his attention is relative to their power of helping him forward on his road towards this aim Such a guide the English writer at the present day will nowhere find Failing this, all that can be looked for, all indeed
25 that can be desired, is, that his attention should be fixed on excellent models, that he may reproduce, at any rate, something of their excellence, by penetrating himself with their works and by catching their spirit, if he cannot be taught to produce what is excellent independently
- 30 Foremost among these models for the English writer stands Shakespeare a name the greatest perhaps of all poetical names, a name never to be mentioned without reverence I will venture, however, to express a doubt, whether the influence of his works, excellent and fruitful for the readers of poetry, for the great
35 majority, has been of unmixed advantage to the writers of it Shakespeare indeed chose excellent subjects, the world could afford no better than Macbeth, or Romeo and Juliet, or Othello he had

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no theory respecting the necessity of choosing subjects of present import, or the paramount interest attaching to allegories of the state of one's own mind, like all great poets, he knew well what constituted a poetical action, like them, wherever he found such an action, he took it, like them, too, he found his best in past times 5 But to these general characteristics of all great poets he added a special one of his own, a gift, namely, of happy, abundant, and ingenious expression, eminent and unrivalled so eminent as irresistibly to strike the attention first in him, and even to throw into comparative shade his other excellences as a poet Here has 10 been the mischief These other excellences were his fundamental excellences *as a poet*, what distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur, says Goethe, is *Architectonicè* in the highest sense, that power of execution, which creates, forms, and constitutes not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, 15 not the abundance of illustration But these attractive accessories of a poetical work being more easily seized than the spirit of the whole, and these accessories being possessed by Shakespeare in an unequalled degree, a young writer having recourse to Shakespeare as his model runs great risk of being vanquished and absorbed 20 by them, and, in consequence, of reproducing, according to the measure of his power, these, and these alone Of this preponderating quality of Shakespeare's genius, accordingly, almost the whole of modern English poetry has, it appears to me, felt the influence To the exclusive attention on the part of his imitators to this it is 25 in a great degree owing, that of the majority of modern poetical works the details alone are valuable, the composition worthless In reading them one is perpetually reminded of that terrible sentence on a modern French poet—*il dit tout ce qu'il veut, mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire* 30

Let me give an instance of what I mean I will take it from the works of the very chief among those who seem to have been formed in the school of Shakespeare of one whose exquisite genius and pathetic death render him for ever interesting I will take the poem of *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil*, by Keats I choose this rather 35 than the *Endymion*, because the latter work (which a modern critic has classed with the *Fairy Queen*!), although undoubtedly there

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blows through it the breath of genius, is yet as a whole so utterly incoherent, as not strictly to merit the name of a poem at all. The poem of *Isabella*, then, is a perfect treasure-house of graceful and felicitous words and images: almost in every stanza there occurs
5 one of those vivid and picturesque turns of expression, by which the object is made to flash upon the eye of the mind, and which thrill the reader with a sudden delight. This one short poem contains, perhaps, a greater number of happy single expressions which one could quote than all the extant tragedies of *Sophocles*.
10 But the action, the story? The action in itself is an excellent one, but so feebly is it conceived by the Poet, so loosely constructed, that the effect produced by it, in and for itself, is absolutely null. Let the reader, after he has finished the poem of *Keats*, turn to the same story in the *Decameron*: he will then feel how pregnant and
15 interesting the same action has become in the hands of a great artist, who above all things delineates his object, who subordinates expression to that which it is designed to express.

I have said that the imitators of *Shakespeare*, fixing their attention on his wonderful gift of expression, have directed their imitation to this, neglecting his other excellences. These excellences,
20 the fundamental excellences of poetical art, *Shakespeare* no doubt possessed them—possessed many of them in a splendid degree, but it may perhaps be doubted whether even he himself did not sometimes give scope to his faculty of expression to the prejudice
25 of a higher poetical duty. For we must never forget that *Shakespeare* is the great poet: he is from his skill in discerning and firmly conceiving an excellent action, from his power of intensely feeling a situation, of intimately associating himself with a character, not from his gift of expression, which rather even leads him astray,
30 degenerating sometimes into a fondness for curiosity of expression, into an irritability of fancy, which seems to make it impossible for him to say a thing plainly, even when the press of the action demands the very directest language, or its level character the very simplest. Mr. *Hallam*, than whom it is impossible to find a saner
35 and more judicious critic, has had the courage (for at the present day it needs courage) to remark, how extremely and faultily difficult *Shakespeare's* language often is. It is so: you may find main scenes

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in some of his greatest tragedies, King Lear for instance, where the language is so artificial, so curiously tortured, and so difficult, that every speech has to be read two or three times before its meaning can be comprehended. This over-curiousness of expression is indeed but the excessive employment of a wonderful gift—of the power of saying a thing in a happier way than any other man, nevertheless, it is carried so far that one understands what M Guizot meant, when he said that Shakespeare appears in his language to have tried all styles except that of simplicity. He has not the severe and scrupulous self-restraint of the ancients, partly no doubt, because he had a far less cultivated and exacting audience: he has indeed a far wider range than they had, a far richer fertility of thought, in this respect he rises above them. In his strong conception of his subject, in the genuine way in which he is penetrated with it, he resembles them, and is unlike the moderns. But in the accurate limitation of it, the conscientious rejection of superfluities, the simple and rigorous development of it from the first line of his work to the last, he falls below them, and comes nearer to the moderns. In his chief works, besides what he has of his own, he has the elementary soundness of the ancients, he has their important action and their large and broad manner: but he has not their purity of method. He is therefore a less safe model, for what he has of his own is personal, and inseparable from his own rich nature, it may be imitated and exaggerated, it cannot be learned or applied as an art, he is above all suggestive, more valuable, therefore, to young writers as men than as artists. But clearness of arrangement, rigour of development, simplicity of style—these may to a certain extent be learned: and these may, I am convinced, be learned best from the ancients, who although infinitely less suggestive than Shakespeare, are thus, to the artist, more instructive.

What, then, it will be asked, are the ancients to be our sole models? the ancients with their comparatively narrow range of experience, and their widely different circumstances? Not, certainly, that which is narrow in the ancients, nor that in which we can no longer sympathize. An action like the action of the Antigone of Sophocles, which turns upon the conflict between the heroine's duty to her brother's corpse and that to the laws of her

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country, is no longer one in which it is possible that we should feel a deep interest. I am speaking too, it will be remembered, not of the best sources of intellectual stimulus for the general reader, but of the best models of instruction for the individual writer. This
 5 last may certainly learn of the ancients, better than anywhere else, three things which it is vitally important for him to know—the all-importance of the choice of a subject, the necessity of accurate construction, and the subordinate character of expression. He will learn from them how unspeakably superior is the effect of the one
 10 moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or by the happiest image. As he penetrates into the spirit of the great classical works, as he becomes gradually aware of their intense significance, their noble simplicity, and their calm pathos, he will be
 15 convinced that it is this effect, unity and profoundness of moral impression, at which the ancient Poets aimed, that it is this which constitutes the grandeur of their works, and which makes them immortal. He will desire to direct his own efforts towards producing the same effect. Above all, he will deliver himself from the
 20 jargon of modern criticism, and escape the danger of producing poetical works conceived in the spirit of the passing time, and which partake of its transitoriness.

The present age makes great claims upon us—we owe it service, it will not be satisfied without our admiration. I know not how it
 25 is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgement, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience—they are more truly than others
 30 under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live. They wish neither to applaud nor to revile their age—they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want. What they want, they know very well, they want to educate and cultivate what
 35 is best and noblest in themselves—they know, too, that this is no easy task—*χαλεπὸν*, as Pittacus said, *χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι*—and they ask themselves sincerely whether their age and its literature

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can assist them in the attempt If they are endeavouring to practise any art, they remember the plain and simple proceedings of the old artists, who attained their grand results by penetrating themselves with some noble and significant action, not by inflating themselves with a belief in the pre-eminent importance and greatness of their own times. They do not talk of their mission, nor of interpreting their age, nor of the coming Poet, all this, they know, is the mere delirium of vanity, their business is not to praise their age, but to afford to the men who live in it the highest pleasure which they are capable of feeling If asked to afford this by means 10 of subjects drawn from the age itself, they ask what special fitness the present age has for supplying them they are told that it is an era of progress, an age commissioned to carry out the great ideas of industrial development and social amelioration They reply that with all this they can do nothing, that the elements they need for 15 the exercise of their art are great actions, calculated powerfully and delightfully to affect what is permanent in the human soul, that so far as the present age can supply such actions, they will gladly make use of them, but that an age wanting in moral grandeur can with difficulty supply such, and an age of spiritual discomfort with 20 difficulty be powerfully and delightfully affected by them

A host of voices will indignantly rejoin that the present age is inferior to the past neither in moral grandeur nor in spiritual health He who possesses the discipline I speak of will content himself with remembering the judgements passed upon the present age, in this 25 respect, by the two men, the one of strongest head, the other of widest culture, whom it has produced, by Goethe and by Niebuhr It will be sufficient for him that he knows the opinions held by these two great men respecting the present age and its literature, and that he feels assured in his own mind that their aims and demands 30 upon life were such as he would wish, at any rate, his own to be, and their judgement as to what is impeding and disabling such as he may safely follow He will not, however, maintain a hostile attitude towards the false pretensions of his age, he will content himself with not being overwhelmed by them He will esteem 35

26-27 the two men culture] the men of strongest head and widest culture 1853, 1854

PREFACE

himself fortunate if he can succeed in banishing from his mind all feelings of contradiction, and irritation, and impatience, in order to delight himself with the contemplation of some noble action of a heroic time, and to enable others, through his representation
5 of it, to delight in it also

I am far indeed from making any claim, for myself, that I possess this discipline, or for the following Poems, that they breathe its spirit. But I say, that in the sincere endeavour to learn and practise, amid the bewildering confusion of our times, what is sound and
10 true in poetical art, I seemed to myself to find the only sure guidance, the only solid footing, among the ancients. They, at any rate, knew what they wanted in Art, and we do not. It is this uncertainty which is disheartening, and not hostile criticism. How often have I felt this when reading words of disparagement or of
15 cavil that it is the uncertainty as to what is really to be aimed at which makes our difficulty, not the dissatisfaction of the critic, who himself suffers from the same uncertainty. *Non me tua fervida terrent Dicta. Du me terrent, et Jupiter hostis*

Two kinds of *dilettanti*, says Goethe, there are in poetry: he
20 who neglects the indispensable mechanical part, and thinks he has done enough if he shows spirituality and feeling, and he who seeks to arrive at poetry merely by mechanism, in which he can acquire an artisan's readiness, and is without soul and matter. And he adds, that the first does most harm to Art, and the last to himself. If we
25 must be *dilettanti* if it is impossible for us, under the circumstances amidst which we live, to think clearly, to feel nobly, and to delineate firmly if we cannot attain to the mastery of the great artists—let us, at least, have so much respect for our Art as to prefer it to ourselves: let us not bewilder our successors: let us
30 transmit to them the practice of Poetry, with its boundaries and wholesome regulative laws, under which excellent works may again, perhaps, at some future time, be produced, not yet fallen into oblivion through our neglect, not yet condemned and cancelled by the influence of their eternal enemy, Caprice.

FOX HOW, AMBLESIDE,
October 1, 1853

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE EDITION OF 1854

[Reprinted 1857]

I HAVE allowed the Preface to the former edition of these Poems to stand almost without change, because I still believe it to be, in the main, true. I must not, however, be supposed insensible to the force of much that has been alleged against portions of it, or unaware that it contains many things incompletely stated, many things which need limitation. It leaves, too, untouched the question, how far, and in what manner, the opinions there expressed respecting the choice of subjects apply to lyric poetry, that region of the poetical field which is chiefly cultivated at present. But neither have I time now to supply these deficiencies, nor is this the proper place for attempting it. On one or two points alone I wish to offer, in the briefest possible way, some explanation.

An objection has been ably urged to the classing together, as subjects equally belonging to a past time, Oedipus and Macbeth. And it is no doubt true that to Shakespeare, standing on the verge of the middle ages, the epoch of Macbeth was more familiar than that of Oedipus. But I was speaking of actions as they presented themselves to us moderns, and it will hardly be said that the European mind, since Voltaire, has much more affinity with the times of Macbeth than with those of Oedipus. As moderns, it seems to me, we have no longer any direct affinity with the circumstances and feelings of either, as individuals, we are attracted towards this or that personage, we have a capacity for imagining him, irrespective of his times, solely according to a law of personal sympathy, and those subjects for which we feel this personal attraction most strongly, we may hope to treat successfully. Alcestis or Joan of Arc, Charlemagne or Agamemnon—one of these is not really nearer to us now than another, each can be made present only by an act of poetic imagination, but this man's imagination has an affinity for one of them, and that man's for another.

It has been said that I wish to limit the Poet in his choice of subjects to the period of Greek and Roman antiquity, but it is not so.

26 Alcestis] Prometheus 1854

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ADVERTISEMENT

I only counsel him to choose for his subjects great actions, without regarding to what time they belong Nor do I deny that the poetic faculty can and does manifest itself in treating the most trifling action, the most hopeless subject But it is a pity that power should
5 be wasted, and that the Poet should be compelled to impart interest and force to his subject, instead of receiving them from it, and thereby doubling his impressiveness There is, it has been excellently said, an immortal strength in the stories of great actions the most gifted poet, then, may well be glad to supplement with it
10 that mortal weakness, which, in presence of the vast spectacle of life and the world, he must for ever feel to be his individual portion

Again, with respect to the study of the classical writers of antiquity it has been said that we should emulate rather than imitate them I make no objection all I say is, let us study them
15 They can help to cure us of what is, it seems to me, the great vice of our intellect, manifesting itself in our incredible vagaries in literature, in art, in religion, in morals, namely, that it is *fantastic*, and wants *sanity* Sanity—that is the great virtue of the ancient literature the want of that is the great defect of the modern, in
20 spite of all its variety and power It is impossible to read carefully the great ancients, without losing something of our caprice and eccentricity and to emulate them we must at least read them

LONDON,
June 1, 1854.

(Small Arabic numbers in the text of the poems direct the reader's attention not to footnotes but to notes by the author, pp 487-502)

EARLY POEMS

SONNETS

QUIET WORK

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

ONE lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—

Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity! 5
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil, 10
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,

1 1849 Two lessons, Nature, 2 1849 Two lessons that in every
wind are blown, 1853-7 One lesson which 3 1849 Two blend-
ing duties, harmonis'd in one, 1853-7 two duties serv'd in one, MS
alteration (in 1854 volume) not adopted kept in one] at one 6 1849
Of labour, that in one short hour outgrows 1853-7 that in still advance
outgrows MS alterations (in 1854 volume), not adopted

that in fruit by far outgoes
by far outgrows
in lasting fruit outgrows
with mute advance outgoes

7 1849 Man's noisy schemes, MS alterations (in 1854 volume), not
adopted

Man's noisy feats
work

Much noisier work,

10 1849 Man's weak complainings 1853-80 Man's senseless uproar
MS alterations (in 1854 volume), not adopted

Our senseless uproar mingling with our toil,
Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,

11 1869-80 quiet ministers

Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting,
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

Much he, whose friendship I not long since won,
That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son
Clear'd Rome of what most shamed him But he his

My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul,
From first youth tested up to extreme old age, 10
Business could not make dull, nor passion wild,

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole,
The mellow glory of the Attic stage,
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

OTHERS abide our question Thou art free
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

12 1849 glorious course 13 1849 chiding still
To A FRIEND 4 1849-57 'Tmolus' Smyrna's 6 Letter to Clough
Of that lame slave,
SHAKESPEARE 3 1869 So some sovran hill 4 MS, 1849-57
That to the stars

SONNETS

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea, 5
 Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
 Spares but the cloudy border of his base
 To the foil'd searching of mortality,

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
 Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure, 10
 Didst tread on earth unguess'd at —Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
 All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
 Find their sole speech in that victorious brow

WRITTEN IN EMERSON'S ESSAYS

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '77, and thereafter]

'O MONSTROUS, dead, unprofitable world,
 That thou canst hear, and hearing, hold thy way!
 A voice oracular hath peal'd to-day,
 To-day a hero's banner is unfurl'd,

Hast thou no lip for welcome?'—So I said 5
 Man after man, the world smiled and pass'd by;
 A smile of wistful incredulity
 As though one spake of life unto the dead—

7 MS alteration (in 1854 volume), not adopted Spares often but the
 border 1869 Spares but the border, often, of his base 9 MS
 alteration (in 1854 volume), not adopted whose wit to highest heaven did go
 1869 whose head did stars 11 MS 1849-69 Didst walk on Earth
 MS alterations (in 1854 volume), not adopted, save for exception noted

Didst pass
 stand 1877
 live

13 MS 1849-54 weakness that MS, 1849-54 griefs that
 14 1849-77 sole voice

WRITTEN IN EMERSON'S ESSAYS 8 1849-77 of noise unto the dead

SONNETS

Scornful, and strange, and sorrowful, and full
Of bitter knowledge Yet the will is free,
Strong is the soul, and wise, and beautiful,
The seeds of godlike power are in us still,
Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will!—
Dumb judges, answer, truth or mockery?

10

WRITTEN IN BUTLER'S SERMONS

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1877 and thereafter]

AFFECTIONS, Instincts, Principles, and Powers,
Impulse and Reason, Freedom and Control—
So men, unravelling God's harmonious whole,
Rend in a thousand shreds this life of ours

Vain labour! Deep and broad, where none may see, 5
Spring the foundations of that shadowy throne
Where man's one nature, queen-like, sits alone,
Centred in a majestic unity,

And rays her powers, like sister-islands seen
Linking their coral arms under the sea,
Or cluster'd peaks with plunging gulfs between 10

Spann'd by aerial arches all of gold,
Whereo'er the chariot wheels of life are roll'd
In cloudy circles to eternity

TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

ON HEARING HIM MISPRaised

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1877 and thereafter]

BECAUSE thou hast believed, the wheels of life
Stand never idle, but go always round,
Not by their hands, who vex the patient ground,
Moved only, but by genius, in the strife

WRITTEN IN BUTLER'S SERMONS 6 1849 the shadowy

SONNETS

Of all its chafing torrents after thaw, 5
 Urged, and to feed whose movement, spinning sand,
 The feeble sons of pleasure set their hand,
 And, in this vision of the general law,
 Hast labour'd, but with purpose, hast become
 Laborious, persevering, serious, firm— 10
 For thus, thy track, across the fretful foam
 Of vehement actions without scope or term,
 Call'd history, keeps a splendour, due to wit,
 Which saw one clue to life, and follow'd it

IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

TO A PREACHER

[*First published 1849 Reprinted 1877 and thereafter*]

'In harmony with Nature' Restless fool,
 Who with such heat dost preach what were to thee,
 When true, the last impossibility—
 To be like Nature strong, like Nature cool!

Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more, 5
 And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good
 Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood,
 Nature is stubborn, man would fain adore,
 Nature is fickle, man hath need of rest,
 Nature forgives no debt, and fears no grave, 10
 Man would be mild, and with safe conscience blest.

Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends,
 Nature and man can never be fast friends
 Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her slave!

TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON 9 1849 Hast labour'd with the fore-
 most, 14 1849 one clue

IN HARMONY WITH NATURE *Title, 1849* To an Independent Preacher,
 who preached that we should be 'In Harmony with Nature'

SONNETS

TO GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

ON SEEING, IN THE COUNTRY, HIS PICTURE OF
'THE BOTTLE'

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

ARTIST, whose hand, with horror wing'd, hath torn
From the rank life of towns this leaf¹ and flung
The prodigy of full-blown crime among
Valleys and men to middle fortune born,

Not innocent, indeed, yet not forlorn— 5
Say, what shall calm us when such guests intrude
Like comets on the heavenly solitude?²
Shall breathless glades, cheer'd by shy Dian's horn,

Cold-bubbling springs, or caves²—Not so! The soul
Breasts her own griefs, and, urged too fiercely, says. 10
'Why tremble² True, the nobleness of man

May be by man effaced, man can control
To pain, to death, the bent of his own days
Know thou the worst! So much, not more, he *can* ³

TO A REPUBLICAN FRIEND, 1848

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

GOD knows it, I am with you If to prize
Those virtues, prized and practised by too few,
But prized, but loved, but eminent in you,
Man's fundamental life, if to despise

TO GEORGE CRUIKSHANK *Title, 1849-57* To George Cruikshank, Esq
On Seeing for the First Time His Picture of 'The Bottle,' in the Country
1869 (*only*) *Human Limits* On Seeing George Cruikshank's Picture of 'The
Bottle,' in the Country

TO A REPUBLICAN FRIEND, 1848 *Title date first inserted in 1853*

SONNETS

The barren optimistic sophistries 5
Of comfortable moles, whom what they do
Teaches the limit of the just and true
(And for such doing they require not eyes),

If sadness at the long heart-wasting show 10
Wherein earth's great ones are disquieted,
If thoughts, not idle, while before me flow

The armies of the homeless and unfed—
If these are yours, if this is what you are,
Then am I yours, and what you feel, I share.

CONTINUED

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

Yet, when I muse on what life is, I seem
Rather to patience prompted, than that proud
Prospect of hope which France proclaims so loud—
France, famed in all great arts, in none supreme,

Seeing this vale, this earth, whereon we dream, 5
Is on all sides o'ershadow'd by the high
Uno'erleap'd Mountains of Necessity,
Sparing us narrower margin than we deem.

Nor will that day dawn at a human nod,
When, bursting through the network superposed 10
By selfish occupation—plot and plan,

Lust, avarice, envy—liberated man,
All difference with his fellow-mortal closed,
Shall be left standing face to face with God

8 1849-57 And for such doing have no need of eyes 1869 (And for
such doing they require no eyes),

CONTINUED 13 1849-57 his fellow man compos'd,

SONNETS

RELIGIOUS ISOLATION

TO THE SAME FRIEND

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

CHILDREN (as such forgive them) have I known,
Ever in their own eager pastime bent
To make the incurious bystander, intent
On his own swarming thoughts, an interest own—

Too fearful or too fond to play alone 5
Do thou, whom light in thine own inmost soul
(Not less thy boast) illuminates, control
Wishes unworthy of a man full-grown

What though the holy secret, which moulds thee,
Mould not the solid earth? though never winds 10
Have whisper'd it to the complaining sea,

Nature's great law, and law of all men's minds?—
To its own impulse every creature stirs,
Live by thy light, and earth will live by hers!

MYCERINUS²

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

'Nor by the justice that my father spurn'd,
Not for the thousands whom my father slew,
Altars unfed and temples overturn'd,
Cold hearts and thankless tongues, where thanks are due,
Fell this dread voice from lips that cannot lie, 5
Stern sentence of the Powers of Destiny

RELIGIOUS ISOLATION Under title, 1849-57 To the Same 1869
To a Friend 10 1849-81 Moulds not MS alteration (in 1881
volumes) Mould
MYCERINUS 4 1849-77 thanks were due 5 1849-57 this late
VOICE

MYCERINUS

I will unfold my sentence and my crime
 My crime—that, rapt in reverential awe,
 I sate obedient, in the fiery prime
 Of youth, self-govern'd, at the feet of Law, 10
 Ennobling this dull pomp, the life of kings,
 By contemplation of diviner things
 'My father loved injustice, and lived long,
 Crown'd with gray hairs he died, and full of sway.
 I loved the good he scorn'd, and hated wrong— 15
 The Gods declare my recompence to-day
 I look'd for life more lasting, rule more high,
 And when six years are measured, lo, I die!
 'Yet surely, O my people, did I deem
 Man's justice from the all-just Gods was given, 20
 A light that from some upper fount did beam,
 Some better archetype, whose seat was heaven,
 A light that, shining from the blest abodes,
 Did shadow somewhat of the life of Gods
 'Mere phantoms of man's self-tormenting heart, 25
 Which on the sweets that woo it dares not feed!
 Vain dreams, which quench our pleasures, then depart,
 When the duped soul, self-master'd, claims its meed,
 When, on the strenuous just man, Heaven bestows,
 Crown of his struggling life, an unjust close! 30
 'Seems it so light a thing, then, austere Powers,
 To spurn man's common lure, life's pleasant things?
 Seems there no joy in dances crown'd with flowers,
 Love, free to range, and regal banquetings?
 Bend ye on these, indeed, an unmoved eye, 35
 Not Gods but ghosts, in frozen apathy?
 'Or is it that some Force, too wise, too strong,
 Even for yourselves to conquer or beguile,
 Sweeps earth, and heaven, and men, and gods along,
 27 1849-69 dreams, that 37 1849-69 that some Power, 1877-
 81 too stern, too strong 39 1849-57 Whirls earth 1869-81
 Bears earth

MYCERINUS

Like the broad volume of the insurgent Nile² 40
And the great powers we serve, themselves may be
Slaves of a tyrannous necessity²

'Or in mid-heaven, perhaps, your golden cars,
Where earthly voice climbs never, wing their flight,
And in wild hunt, through mazy tracts of stars, 45
Sweep in the sounding stillness of the night²
Or in deaf ease, on thrones of dazzling sheen,
Drinking deep draughts of joy, ye dwell serene²

'Oh, wherefore cheat our youth, if thus it be,
Of one short joy, one lust, one pleasant dream² 50
Stringing vain words of powers we cannot see,
Blind divinations of a will supreme,
Lost labour¹ when the circumambient gloom
But hides, if Gods, Gods careless of our doom²

'The rest I give to joy Even while I speak, 55
My sand runs short, and—as yon star-shot ray,
Hemm'd by two banks of cloud, peers pale and weak,
Now, as the barrier closes, dies away—
Even so do past and future intertwine,
Blotting this six years' space, which yet is mine 60

'Six years—six little years—six drops of time!
Yet suns shall rise, and many moons shall wane,
And old men die, and young men pass their prime,
And languid pleasure fade and flower again,
And the dull Gods behold, ere these are flown, 65
Revels more deep, joy keener than their own

'Into the silence of the groves and woods
I will go forth, though something would I say—
Something—yet what, I know not, for the Gods
The doom they pass²revoke not, nor delay, 70
And prayers, and gifts, and tears, are fruitless all,
And the night waxes, and the shadows fall

40 1849-57 the broad rushing 1849 the column'd Nile, 1853-
7 the insurgent Nile 68 1849-57 but something

MYCERINUS

'Ye men of Egypt, ye have heard your king!
 I go, and I return not But the will
 Of the great Gods is plain, and ye must bring 75
 Ill deeds, ill passions, zealous to fulfil
 Their pleasure, to their feet, and reap their praise,
 The praise of Gods, rich boon¹ and length of days²

—So spake he, half in anger, half in scorn,
 And one loud cry of grief and of amaze 80
 Broke from his sorrowing people, so he spake,
 And turning, left them there, and with brief pause,
 Girt with a throng of revellers, bent his way
 To the cool region of the groves he loved
 There by the river-banks he wander'd on, 85
 From palm-grove on to palm-grove, happy trees,
 Their smooth tops shining sunward, and beneath
 Burying their unsunn'd stems in grass and flowers,
 Where in one dream the feverish time of youth
 Might fade in slumber, and the feet of joy 90
 Might wander all day long and never tire
 Here came the king, holding high feast, at morn,
 Rose-crown'd, and ever, when the sun went down,
 A hundred lamps beam'd in the tranquil gloom,
 From tree to tree all through the twinkling grove, 95
 Revealing all the tumult of the feast—
 Flush'd guests, and golden goblets foam'd with wine,
 While the deep-burnish'd foliage overhead
 Splinter'd the silver arrows of the moon

It may be that sometimes his wondering soul 100
 From the loud joyful laughter of his lips
 Might shrink half startled, like a guilty man
 Who wrestles with his dream, as some pale shape
 Gliding half hidden through the dusky stems,
 Would thrust a hand before the lifted bowl, 105
 Whispering *A little space, and thou art mine!*
 It may be on that joyless feast his eye

MYCERINUS

Dwelt with mere outward seeming, he, within,
Took measure of his soul, and knew its strength,
And by that silent knowledge, day by day, 110
Was calm'd, ennobled, comforted, sustain'd
It may be, but not less his brow was smooth,
And his clear laugh fled ringing through the gloom,
And his mirth quail'd not at the mild reproof
Sigh'd out by winter's sad tranquillity, 115
Nor, pall'd with its own fulness, ebb'd and died
In the rich languor of long summer-days,
Nor wither'd when the palm-tree plumes, that roof'd
With their mild dark his grassy banquet-hall,
Bent to the cold winds of the showerless spring, 120
No, nor grew dark when autumn brought the clouds
So six long years he revell'd, night and day
And when the muth wax'd loudest, with dull sound
Sometimes from the grove's centre echoes came,
To tell his wondering people of their king, 125
In the still night, across the steaming flats,
Mix'd with the murmur of the moving Nile.

THE CHURCH OF BROU

[First published 1853 Reprinted 1854, '57, '69, '81, and thereafter In 1877
Part III was printed as a separate poem, 'A Tomb among the Mountains']

I

The Castle

Down the Savoy valleys sounding,
Echoing round this castle old,
'Mid the distant mountain-chalets
Hark! what bell for church is toll'd?

THE CASTLE 4 After the first stanza there was, from 1853 to 1857, a short rule to mark off the first four lines as a distinct portion of the poem. Similar marks were used instead of asterisks in the later portions requiring to be so set off

THE CHURCH OF BROU

In the bright October morning
Savoy's Duke had left his bride
From the castle, past the drawbridge,
Flow'd the hunters' merry tide 5

Steeds are neighing, gallants glittering,
Gay, her smiling lord to greet, 10
From her mullion'd chamber-casement
Smiles the Duchess Marguerite

From Vienna, by the Danube,
Here she came, a bride, in spring
Now the autumn crisps the forest, 15
Hunters gather, bugles ring

Hounds are pulling, prickers swearing,
Horses fret, and boar-spears glance
Off!—They sweep the marshy forests,
Westward, on the side of France 20

Hark! the game's on foot, they scatter!—
Down the forest-ridings lone,
Furious, single horsemen gallop—
Hark! a shout—a crash—a groan!

Pale and breathless, came the hunters, 25
On the turf dead lies the boar—
God! the Duke lies stretch'd beside him,
Senseless, weltering in his gore

* * * *

In the dull October evening,
Down the leaf-strewn forest-road, 30
To the castle, past the drawbridge,
Came the hunters with their load

In the hall, with sconces blazing,
Ladies waiting round her seat,
Clothed in smiles, beneath the daïs 35
Sate the Duchess Marguerite

THE CHURCH OF BROU

Hark! below the gates unbarring!
 Tramp of men and quick commands!
 '—'Tis my lord come back from hunting—'
 And the Duchess claps her hands 40
 Slow and tired, came the hunters—
 Stopp'd in darkness in the court
 '—Ho, this way, ye laggard hunters!
 To the hall! What sport? What sport?'—
 Slow they enter'd with their master, 45
 In the hall they laid him down
 On his coat were leaves and blood-stains,
 On his brow an angry frown
 Dead her princely youthful husband
 Lay before his youthful wife, 50
 Bloody, 'neath the flaring sconces—
 And the sight froze all her life

* * * *

In Vienna, by the Danube,
 Kings hold revel, gallants meet
 Gay of old amid the gayest 55
 Was the Duchess Marguerite
 In Vienna, by the Danube,
 Feast and dance her youth beguiled
 Till that hour she never sorrow'd,
 But from then she never smiled 60
 'Mid the Savoy mountain valleys
 Far from town or haunt of man,
 Stands a lonely church, unfinish'd,
 Which the Duchess Maud began,
 Old, that Duchess stern began it, 65
 In gray age, with palsied hands,
 But she died while it was building,
 And the Church unfinish'd stands—

67 1853-4 as it was

THE CHURCH OF BROU

Stands as erst the builders left it,
 When she sank into her grave, 70
 Mountain greensward paves the chancel,
 Harebells flower in the nave

'—In my castle all is sorrow,'
 Said the Duchess Marguerite then,
 'Guide me, some one, to the mountain' 75
 We will build the Church again'—

Sandall'd palmers, faring homeward,
 Austrian knights from Syria came
 '—Austrian wanderers bring, O warders!
 Homage to your Austrian dame'— 80

From the gate the warders answer'd
 '—Gone, O knights, is she you knew'
 Dead our Duke, and gone his Duchess,
 Seek her at the Church of Brou'—

Austrian knights and march-worn palmers 85
 Climb the winding mountain-way—
 Reach the valley, where the Fabric
 Rises higher day by day.

Stones are sawing, hammers ringing,
 On the work the bright sun shines, 90
 In the Savoy mountain-meadows,
 By the stream, below the pines

On her palfrey white the Duchess
 Sate and watch'd her working train—
 Flemish carvers, Lombard gilders, 95
 German masons, smiths from Spain

Clad in black, on her white palfrey,
 Her old architect beside—
 There they found her in the mountains,
 Morn and noon and eventide 100

70 1853-7 she sunk

75 1853-7 'Guide me, vassals,

THE CHURCH OF BROU

There she sate, and watch'd the builders,
Till the Church was roof'd and done
Last of all, the bulders rear'd her
In the nave a tomb of stone

On the tomb two forms they sculptured, 105
Lifelike in the marble pale—
One, the Duke in helm and armour,
One, the Duchess in her veil

Round the tomb the carved stone fretwork
Was at Easter-tide put on 110
Then the Duchess closed her labours,
And she died at the St John

II

The Church

UPON the glistening leaden roof
Of the new Pile, the sunlight shines,
The stream goes leaping by
The hills are clothed with pines sun-proof,
'Mid bright green fields, below the pines, 5
Stands the Church on high
What Church is this, from men aloof?—
'Tis the Church of Brou

At sunrise, from their dewy lair
Crossing the stream, the kine are seen 10
Round the wall to stray—
The churchyard wall that clips the square
Of open hill-sward fresh and green
Where last year they lay
But all things now are order'd fair 15
Round the Church of Brou

THE CHURCH. 13 1853-7 Of shaven hill sward trim

THE CHURCH OF BROU

On Sundays, at the matin-chime,
The Alpine peasants, two and three,
Climb up here to pray,
Burghers and dames, at summer's prime, 20
Ride out to church from Chambery,
Dight with mantles gay
But else it is a lonely time
Round the Church of Brou

On Sundays, too, a priest doth come 25
From the wall'd town beyond the pass,
Down the mountain-way,
And then you hear the organ's hum,
You hear the white-robed priest say mass,
And the people pray 30
But else the woods and fields are dumb
Round the Church of Brou

And after church, when mass is done,
The people to the nave repair
Round the tomb to stray, 35
And marvel at the Forms of stone,
And praise the chisell'd broderies rare—
Then they drop away
The princely Pair are left alone
In the Church of Brou 40

III

The Tomb

So rest, for ever rest, O princely Pair!
In your high church, 'mid the still mountain-air,
Where horn, and hound, and vassals, never come
Only the blessed Saints are smiling dumb,
From the rich painted windows of the nave, 5
On aisle, and transept, and your marble grave,
THE TOMB *Title, 1877* A Tomb among the Mountains

THE CHURCH OF BROU

Where thou, young Prince! shalt never more arise
 From the fringed mattress where thy Duchess lies,
 On autumn-mornings, when the bugle sounds,
 And ride across the drawbridge with thy hounds 10
 To hunt the boar in the crisp woods till eve,
 And thou, O Princess! shalt no more receive,
 Thou and thy ladies, in the hall of state,
 The jaded hunters with their bloody freight,
 Coming benighted to the castle-gate 15
 So sleep, for ever sleep, O marble Pair!
 Or, if ye wake, let it be then, when fair
 On the carved western front a flood of light
 Streams from the setting sun, and colours bright
 Prophets, transfigured Saints, and Martyrs brave, 20
 In the vast western window of the nave,
 And on the pavement round the Tomb there glints
 A chequer-work of glowing sapphire-tints,
 And amethyst, and ruby—then uncloset
 Your eyelids on the stone where ye repose, 25
 And from your broider'd pillows lift your heads,
 And rise upon your cold white marble beds,
 And, looking down on the warm rosy tints,
 Which chequer, at your feet, the illumined flints,
 Say *What is this? we are in bliss—forgiven—* 30
Behold the pavement of the courts of Heaven!
 Or let it be on autumn nights, when rain
 Doth rustlingly above your heads complain
 On the smooth leaden roof, and on the walls
 Shedding her pensive light at intervals 35
 The moon through the clere-story windows shines,
 And the wind washes through the mountain-pines
 Then, gazing up 'mid the dim pillars high,

17 1853 And if ye wake 27 1869 And raise you on 29 1853-
 7 That chequer, 37 1853 washes in the mountain pines 1854,
 1857 walls among the mountain pines 1869, 1877 washes 'mid the
 mountain pines 38 1853-77 gazing up through MS in 1854
 volume (adopted 1881) up 'mid

THE CHURCH OF BROU

The foliaged marble forest where ye lie,
Hush, ye will say, it is eternity! 40
This is the glimmering verge of Heaven, and these
The columns of the heavenly palaces!
 And, in the sweeping of the wind, your ear
 The passage of the Angels' wings will hear,
 And on the lichen-crustled leads above 45
 The rustle of the eternal rain of love

A MODERN SAPPHO

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '69, and thereafter]

THEY are gone—all is still! Foolish heart, dost thou quiver?
 Nothing stirs on the lawn but the quick lilac-shade
 Far up shines the house, and beneath flows the river—
 Here lean, my head, on this cold balustrade!
 Ere he come—ere the boat by the shining-branch'd border 5
 Of dark elms shoot round, dropping down the proud stream,
 Let me pause, let me strive, in myself make some order,
 Ere their boat-music sound, ere their broider'd flags gleam
 Last night we stood earnestly talking together,
 She enter'd—that moment his eyes turn'd from me! 10
 Fasten'd on her dark hair, and her wreath of white heather—
 As yesterday was, so to-morrow will be
 Their love, let me know, must grow strong and yet stronger,
 Their passion burn more, ere it ceases to burn
 They must love—while they must! but the hearts that love 15
 longer
 Are rare—ah! most loves but flow once, and return

A MODERN SAPPHO 2 1849, 1853 Nothing moves 3 1849,
 1853 gleams the house 4 1849-69 cool balustrade 6 1849,
 1853 come round, 7 1849, 1853 find some order, 8 1849,
 1853 inserted after this line

Is it hope makes me linger? the dim thought, that sorrow
 Means parting? that only in absence lies pain?
 It was well with me once if I saw him to-morrow
 May bring one of the old happy moments again.

A MODERN SAPPHO

I shall suffer—but tney will outlive their affection,
 I shall weep—but their love will be cooling, and he,
 As he drifts to fatigue, discontent, and dejection,
 Will be brought, thou poor heart, how much nearer to thee! 20

For cold is his eye to mere beauty, who, breaking
 The strong band which passion around him hath furl'd,
 Disenchanted by habit, and newly awaking,
 Looks languidly round on a gloom-buried world

Through that gloom he will see but a shadow appearing, 25
 Perceive but a voice as I come to his side—
 But deeper their voice grows, and nobler their bearing,
 Whose youth in the fires of anguish hath died

So, to wait!—But what notes down the wind, hark! are driving? 30
 'Tis he! 'tis their flag, shooting round by the trees!
 —Let my turn, if it *will* come, be swift in arriving!
 Ah! hope cannot long lighten torments like these.

Hast thou yet dealt him, O life, thy full measure? 35
 World, have thy children yet bow'd at his knee?
 Hast thou with myrtle-leaf crown'd him, O pleasure?
 —Crown, crown him quickly, and leave him for me!

REQUIESCAT

[First published 1853 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

STREW on her roses, roses,
 And never a spray of yew!
 In quiet she reposes,
 Ah, would that I did too!

A MODERN SAPPHO	22 1849, 1853 band which beauty	1869 The
strong spell which passion upon him hath hurl'd,		29 1849, 1853
Then—to wait	30 1849, 1853 'tis the boat	31 1849 Let my
turn, if it will come,	1869 Let my turn	

REQUIESCAT

Her mirth the world required, 5
 She bathed it in smiles of glee
 But her heart was tired, tired,
 And now they let her be
 Her life was turning, turning,
 In mazes of heat and sound 10
 But for peace her soul was yearning,
 And now peace laps her round
 Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
 It flutter'd and fal'd for breath
 To-night it doth inherit 15
 The vasty hall of death

YOUTH AND CALM

[First published 1852, as second paragraph of a poem entitled 'Lines written by a Death-bed' Reprinted, as below, 1867 and thereafter]

'Tis death! and peace, indeed, is here,
 And ease from shame, and rest from fear
 There's nothing can disarmle now
 The smoothness of that limpid brow
 But is a calm like this, in truth, 5
 The crowning end of life and youth,
 And when this boon rewards the dead,
 Are all debts paid, has all been said^b
 And is the heart of youth so light,
 Its step so firm, its eye so bright, 10
 Because on its hot brow there blows
 A wind of promise and repose
 From the far grave, to which it goes,
 Because it hath the hope to come,

YOUTH AND CALM Title, 1852 Lines written by a Death-bed 2 1852
 But ah, though peace 3 1852 Though nothing can 5 1852
 Yet is a calm MS *Rutha Quillinan's Album* (Dec 28, 1851) Yet ah, is
 Calm alone, in truth, 8 1868 as all [sic] 10 1852-88 eye so
 bright (later eyes here rejected) MS *Album* step so gay, 11 MS
Album on its hot hour 14 1852-81 Because it has

YOUTH AND CALM

One day, to harbour in the tomb³ 15
 Ah no, the bliss youth dreams is one
 For daylight, for the cheerful sun,
 For feeling nerves and living breath—
 Youth dreams a bliss on this side death.
 It dreams a rest, if not more deep, 20
 More grateful than this marble sleep,
 It hears a voice within it tell
Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well
 'Tis all perhaps which man acquires,
 But 'tis not what our youth desires 25

A MEMORY-PICTURE

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

LAUGH, my friends, and without blame
 Lightly quit what lightly came,
 Rich to-morrow as to-day,
 Spend as madly as you may!
 I, with little land to stir, 5
 Am the exacter labourer
 Ere the parting hour go by,
 Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

19 MS *Album* dreams a joy 20 MS *Album* It asks a rest,
 24 MS *Album* perhaps that

A MEMORY-PICTURE Title, 1849-57 To my Friends, who ridiculed a
 tender Leave-taking 1853-69 Printed as first poem in the 'Switzerland'
 group Refrain 1849-54 Ere the parting kiss be dry, 8 1849-57
 inserted after this line

But my Youth reminds me—"Thou
 Hast liv'd light as these live now
 As these are, thou too wert such
 Much hast had, hast squander'd much."
 Fortune's now less frequent heir,
 Ah! I husband what's grown rare
 Ere the parting kiss be dry, [hour go by 1857]
 Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

*In 1869 this and the preceding stanza were cancelled; the first stanza was
 restored in 1877*

A MEMORY-PICTURE

Once I said 'A face is gone
 If too hotly mused upon, 10
 And our best impressions are
 Those that do themselves repair '
 Many a face I so let flee,
 Ah! is faded utterly
 Ere the parting hour go by, 15
 Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

Marguerite says 'As last year went,
 So the coming year'll be spent,
 Some day next year, I shall be,
 Entering heedless, kiss'd by thee ' 20
 Ah, I hope!—yet, once away,
 What may chain us, who can say?
 Ere the parting hour go by,
 Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

Paint that lilac kerchief, bound 25
 Her soft face, her hair around,
 Tied under the archest chin
 Mockery ever ambush'd in
 Let the fluttering fringes streak
 All her pale, sweet-rounded cheek. 30
 Ere the parting hour go by,
 Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

Paint that figure's pliant grace
 As she tow'rd me lean'd her face,
 Half refused and half resign'd 35
 Murmuring 'Art thou still unkind?'
 Many a broken promise then
 Was new made—to break again
 Ere the parting hour go by,
 Quick, thy tablets, Memory! 40

9 1849-69 Young, I said 1877 Long I said 13 1849-57
 Many a face I then let by, 1869 Many a face I then let flee,
 34 1849-57 towards 1869-81 toward

A MEMORY-PICTURE

Paint those eyes, so blue, so kind,
 Eager tell-tales of her mind,
 Paint, with their impetuous stress
 Of inquiring tenderness,
 Those frank eyes, where deep I see 45
 An angelic gravity

Ere the parting hour go by,
 Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

What, my friends, these feeble lines
 Show, you say, my love declines? 50
 To paint ill as I have done,
 Proves forgetfulness begun?
 Time's gay minions, pleased you see,
 Time, your master, governs me,
 Pleased, you mock the fruitless cry 55
 'Quick, thy tablets, Memory!'

Ah, too true! Time's current strong
 Leaves us fixt to nothing long
 Yet, if little stays with man,
 Ah, retain we all we can! 60
 If the clear impression dies,
 Ah, the dim remembrance prize!
 Ere the parting hour go by,
 Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

A DREAM

[First published 1853 Reprinted 1854, '57, '81, and thereafter]

Was it a dream? We sail'd, I thought we sail'd,
 Martin and I, down a green Alpine stream,
 Border'd, each bank, with pines, the morning sun,
 On the wet umbrage of their glossy tops,

45 1849-69 deep doth lie 1877-8 deep doth be 1880 deep
 will be 58 1849-57, 1877, 1878 us true 1869 us firm
 1881 us join'd MS alteration in 1881 (not adopted) us fixt

A DREAM. From 1853 to 1857 this was the third poem of the 'Switzerland'
 group 3 1853-7 Under o'erhanging pines,

A DREAM

On the red pinings of their forest-floor, 5
 Drew a warm scent abroad, behind the pines
 The mountain-skirts, with all their sylvan change
 Of bright-leaf'd chestnuts and moss'd walnut-trees
 And the frail scarlet-berried ash, began
 Swiss chalets glitter'd on the dewy slopes, 10
 And from some swarded shelf, high up, there came
 Notes of wild pastoral music—over all
 Ranged, diamond-bright, the eternal wall of snow
 Upon the mossy rocks at the stream's edge,
 Back'd by the pines, a plank-built cottage stood, 15
 Bright in the sun, the climbing gourd-plant's leaves
 Muffled its walls, and on the stone-strewn roof
 Lay the warm golden gourds, golden, within,
 Under the eaves, peer'd rows of Indian corn
 We shot beneath the cottage with the stream 20
 On the brown, rude-carved balcony, two forms
 Came forth—Olivia's, Marguerite¹ and thine
 Clad were they both in white, flowers in their breast,
 Straw hats bedeck'd their heads, with ribbons blue,
 Which danced, and on their shoulders, fluttering, play'd 25
 They saw us, they conferr'd, their bosoms heaved,
 And more than mortal impulse fill'd their eyes
 Their lips moved, their white arms, waved eagerly,
 Flash'd once, like falling streams, we rose, we gazed
 One moment, on the rapid's top, our boat 30
 Hung poised—and then the darting river of Life
 (Such now, methought, it was), the river of Life,
 Loud thundering, bore us by, swift, swift it foam'd,
 Black under cliffs it raced, round headlands shone
 Soon the plank'd cottage by the sun-warm'd pines 35
 Faded—the moss—the rocks, us burning plains,
 Bristled with cities, us the sea received

23 1853 their breasts, 25 1853-7 Which wav'd, MS
 alteration (in 1854 volume), not adopted Which stir'd, 32 added in
 1881 35 1853-81 'mid the sun-warm'd MS alteration (in 1881
 volume), not adopted by the sun-warm'd

THE NEW SIRENS

[First published 1849 Reprinted in MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE,
December 1876, then in 1877 and thereafter]

In the cedarn shadow sleeping,
Where cool grass and fragrant glooms
Forth at noon had lured me, creeping
From your darken'd palace rooms—
I, who in your train at morning 5
Stroll'd and sang with joyful mind,
Heard, in slumber, sounds of warning,
Heard the hoarse boughs labour in the wind

Who are they, O pensive Graces,
—For I dream'd they wore your forms— 10
Who on shores and sea-wash'd places
Scoop the shelves and fret the storms?
Who, when ships are that way tending,
Troop across the flushing sands,
To all reefs and narrows wending, 15
With blown tresses, and with beckoning hands?

Yet I see, the howling levels
Of the deep are not your lair,
And your tragic-vaunted revels
Are less lonely than they were 20
Like those Kings with treasure steering
From the jewell'd lands of dawn,
Troops, with gold and gifts, appearing,
Stream all day through your enchanted lawn

Title, 1849, 1876 The New Sirens, A Palinode 1 1849, 1876
cedar shadow 1877 cedar-shadow 3 1849 Oft at noon
have 1876-81 Late at eve had 7 1849 Heard, at evening,
8 1876-81 Saw the hoarse boughs
21 ff 1849 In a Tyrian galley steering
From the golden springs of dawn,
Troops, like Eastern kings, appearing,

THE NEW SIRENS

And we too, from upland valleys, 25
 Where some Muse with half-curved frown
 Leans her ear to your mad sallies
 Which the charm'd winds never drown,
 By faint music guided, ranging
 The scared glens, we wander'd on, 30
 Left our awful laurels hanging,
 And came heap'd with myrtles to your throne

From the dragon-warder'd fountains
 Where the springs of knowledge are,
 From the watchers on the mountains, 35
 And the bright and morning star,
 We are exiles, we are falling,
 We have lost them at your call—
 O ye false ones, at your calling
 Seeking ceiled chambers and a palace-hall! 40

Are the accents of your luring
 More melodious than of yore?
 Are those frail forms more enduring
 Than the charms Ulysses bore?
 That we sought you with rejoicings, 45
 Till at evening we descry
 At a pause of Siren voicings
 These vexed branches and this howling sky?

* * * *

Oh, your pardon! The uncouthness
 Of that primal age is gone, 50
 And the skin of dazzling smoothness
 Screens not now a heart of stone
 Love has flush'd those cruel faces,
 And those slacken'd arms forgo
 The delight of death-embraces, 55
 And yon whitening bone-mounds do not grow.

54 1849, 1876 your slacken'd arms forego 55 1849 of fierce embraces
 56 1849 And those whitening

THE NEW SIRENS

'Ah,' you say, 'the large appearance
Of man's labour is but vain,
And we plead as staunch adherence
Due to pleasure as to pain' 60
Pointing to earth's careworn creatures,
'Come,' you murmur with a sigh
'Ah! we own diviner features,
Lofter bearing, and a prouder eye

'Come,' you say, 'the hours were dreary, 65
Dull did life in torpor fade,
Time is lame, and we grew weary
In the slumbrous cedarn shade
Round our hearts with long caresses,
With low sighings, Silence stole, 70
And her load of steaming tresses
Fell, like Ossa, on the climbing soul

'Come,' you say, 'the soul is fainting
Till she search and learn her own,
And the wisdom of man's painting 75
Leaves her riddle half unknown
Come,' you say, 'the brain is seeking,
While the sovran heart is dead,
Yet this glean'd, when Gods were speaking,
Rarer secrets than the toiling head 80

57 1849, 1876 'Come,' you say 59 1849 firm adherence 61 1849
some world-worn creatures 65 1849 are dreary 66 1849 Life
is long, and will not fade 1877 Life without love does but fade
1881 Dull, without love, life doth fade 67 1849 Time is lame, and
we grow weary 1876-81 Vain it wastes, and we grew weary MS
alteration 1881 Vain it wore, and we grew weary 68 1849 this slumbrous
70 1849 With low sighs hath Silence stole, 72 1849 Weighs, like
Ossa, on the aery soul 1876-81 Weigh'd, like Ossa, on the aery soul
MS alteration (in 1881 volume) Fell like on the climbing soul.
78 1849 When the princely heart is dead 1876-81 While the princely
heart is dead, MS alteration (in 1881 volume) sovran heart

THE NEW SIRENS

'Come,' you say, 'opinion trembles,
 Judgment shifts, convictions go,
 Life dries up, the heart dissembles—
 Only, what we feel, we know
 Hath your wisdom felt emotions?² 85
 Will it weep our burning tears?²
 Hath it drunk of our love-potions
 Crowning moments with the wealth of years?²

—I am dumb Alas, too soon all
 Man's grave reasons disappear! 90
 Yet, I think, at God's tribunal
 Some large answer you shall hear
 But, for me, my thoughts are straying
 Where at sunrise, through your vines,
 On these lawns I saw you playing, 95
 Hanging garlands on your odorous pines,

When your showering locks enwound you,
 And your heavenly eyes shone through,
 When the pine-boughs yielded round you,
 And your brows were starr'd with dew, 100
 And immortal forms, to meet you,
 Down the statued alleys came,
 And through golden horns, to greet you,
 Blew such music as a God may frame

Yes, I muse! And if the dawning 105
 Into daylight never grew,
 If the glistering wings of morning
 On the dry noon shook their dew,
 If the fits of joy were longer,
 Or the day were sooner done, 110
 Or, perhaps, if hope were stronger,

85 1849-77 wisdom known 88 1849-81 weight of years?
 MS alteration (in 1881 volume) wealth of years 94 1849 the vines
 96 1849, 1876 on the odorous

THE NEW SIRENS

No weak nursling of an earthly sun
Pluck, pluck cypress, O pale maidens,
Dusk the hall with yew!

* * * *

For a bound was set to meetings, 115
And the sombre day dragg'd on,
And the burst of joyful greetings,
And the joyful dawn, were gone
For the eye grows fill'd with gazing,
And on raptures follow calms, 120
And those warm locks men were praising,
Droop'd, unbraided, on your listless arms

Storms unsmooth'd your folded valleys,
And made all your cedars frown,
Leaves were whirling in the alleys 125
Which your lovers wander'd down
—Sitting cheerless in your bowers,
The hands propping the sunk head,
Still they gall you, the long hours,
And the hungry thought, that must be fed! 130

Is the pleasure that is tasted
Patient of a long review?
Will the fire joy hath wasted,
Mused on, warm the heart anew?
—Or, are those old thoughts returning, 135
Guests the dull sense never knew,
Stars, set deep, yet inly burning,
Germs, your untrimm'd passion overgrew?

115 1849 But a bound 119 1849, 1876 was fill'd 125 1849
Leaves are whirling 129 1849-81 Do they gall you, the long hours,
And the hungry thought, that must be fed?
MS alteration (in 1881 volume) Still they gall

THE NEW SIRENS

Once, like us, you took your station
 Watchers for a purer fire, 140
 But you droop'd in expectation,
 And you wearied in desire
 When the first rose flush was steeping
 All the frore peak's awful crown,
 Shepherds say, they found you sleeping 145
 In some windless valley, farther down

Then you wept, and slowly raising
 Your dozed eyelids, sought again,
 Half in doubt, they say, and gazing
 Sadly back, the seats of men,— 150
 Snatch'd a turbid inspiration
 From some transient earthly sun,
 And proclaim'd your vain ovation
 For those mimic raptures you had won

* * * *

With a sad, majestic motion, 155
 With a stately, slow surprise,
 From their earthward-bound devotion
 Lifting up your languid eyes—
 Would you freeze my too loud boldness,
 Dumbly smiling as you go, 160
 One faint frown of distant coldness
 Flitting fast across each marble brow?

Do I brighten at your sorrow,
 O sweet Pleaders?—doth my lot
 Find assurance in to-morrow 165
 Of one joy, which you have not?

139 1849, 1876 Once, like me, 146 1849 In a windless valley,
 further down 151 1849 an earthly inspiration 152 1849
 human Sun, 154 1849 For the mimic raptures you had won.
 Pluck, pluck cypress, O pale maidens,
 Dusk the hall with yew!
 159 1849-81 my louder boldness, MS alteration (in 1881 volume)
 my too loud

THE NEW SIRENS

O, speak once, and shame my sadness!
 Let this sobbing, Phrygian strain,
 Mock'd and baffled by your gladness,
 Mar the music of your feasts in vain! 170

* * * *

Scent, and song, and light, and flowers!
 Gust on gust, the harsh winds blow—
 Come, bind up those ringlet showers!
 Roses for that dreaming brow!
 Come, once more that ancient lightness, 175
 Glancing feet, and eager eyes!
 Let your broad lamps flash the brightness
 Which the sorrow-stricken day denies!

Through black depths of serried shadows,
 Up cold aisles of buried glade, 180
 In the midst of river-meadows
 Where the looming kine are laid,
 From your dazzled windows streaming,
 From your humming festal room,
 Deep and far, a broken gleaming 185
 Reels and shivers on the ruffled gloom

Where I stand, the grass is glowing,
 Doubtless you are passing fair!
 But I hear the north wind blowing,
 And I feel the cold night-air 190
 Can I look on your sweet faces,
 And your proud heads backward thrown,
 From this dusk of leaf-strewn places
 With the dumb woods and the night alone?

167 ff 1849

let my sadness

And thus sobbing Phrygian strain,
 Sham'd and baffled by your gladness,
 Blame the music of your feasts in vain.

168 1876 throbbing, Phrygian strain, 172 1849 the hoarse winds

181 1849-81 In the mist 182 1876-81 the looming deer MS

alteration (in 1881 volume) looming kine 184 1849 From the humming

THE NEW SIRENS

Yet, indeed, this flux of guesses— 195
 Mad delight, and frozen calms—
 Mirth to-day and vine-bound tresses,
 And to-morrow—folded palms,
 Is this all? this balanced measure?
 Could life run no happier way? 200
 Joyous, at the height of pleasure,
 Passive at the nadir of dismay?

But, indeed, this proud possession,
 This far-reaching, magic chain,
 Linking in a mad succession 205
 Fits of joy and fits of pain—
 Have you seen it at the closing?
 Have you track'd its clouded ways?
 Can your eyes, while fools are dozing,
 Drop, with mine, adown life's latter days? 210

When a dreary dawn is wading
 Through this waste of sunless greens,
 When the flushing hues are fading
 On the peerless cheek of queens,
 When the mean shall no more sorrow, 215
 And the proudest no more smile,
 As old age, youth's fatal morrow,
 Spreads its cold light wider all that while?

Then, when change itself is over,
 When the slow tide sets one way, 220
 Shall you find the radiant lover,
 Even by moments, of to-day?

195 1849-77	But, indeed,	200 1849	easier way?
201 1849	Happy, at the noon	202 1849	Passive, at the midnight
211 1849-81	a dreary light	213 1849-81	flashing lights
217-18 1849-81	While the dawning of the morrow Widens slowly westward all that while?		

THE NEW SIRENS

The eye wanders, faith is failing—
 O, loose hands, and let it be!
 Proudly, like a king bewailing,
 O, let fall one tear, and set us free! 225

All true speech and large avowal
 Which the jealous soul concedes,
 All man's heart which brooks bestowal,
 All frank faith which passion breeds— 230
 These we had, and we gave truly,
 Doubt not, what we had, we gave!
 False we were not, nor unruly,
 Lodgers in the forest and the cave

Long we wander'd with you, feeding 235
 Our rapt souls on your replies,
 In a wistful silence reading
 All the meaning of your eyes
 By moss-border'd statues sitting,
 By well-heads, in summer days 240
 But we turn, our eyes are fitting—
 See, the white east, and the morning rays!

And you too, O worshipp'd Graces,
 Sylvan Gods of this fair shade!
 Is there doubt on divine faces? 245
 Are the blessed Gods dismay'd?
 Can men worship the wan features,
 The sunk eyes, the wailing tone,
 Of unsphered, discrowned creatures,
 Souls as little godlike as their own? 250

Come, loose hands! The winged fleetness
 Of immortal feet is gone,
 And your scents have shed their sweetness,
 And your flowers are overblown

236 1849 sad souls
 the happy Gods

243 1849 O weeping Graces,

246 1849

THE NEW SIRENS

And your jewell'd gauds surrender 255
Half their glories to the day,
Freely did they flash their splendour,
Freely gave it—but it dies away

In the pines the thrush is waking—
Lo, yon orient hill in flames! 260
Scores of true love knots are breaking
At divorce which it proclaims
When the lamps are paled at morning,
Heart quits heart and hand quits hand
Cold in that unlovely dawning, 265
Loveless, rayless, joyless you shall stand!

Pluck no more red roses, maidens,
Leave the lilies in their dew—
Pluck, pluck cypress, O pale maidens,
Dusk, oh, dusk the hall with yew! 270
—Shall I seek, that I may scorn her,
Her I loved at eventide?
Shall I ask, what faded mourner
Stands, at daybreak, weeping by my side?
Pluck, pluck cypress, O pale maidens! 275
Dusk the hall with yew!

THE VOICE

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1877 and thereafter]

As the kindling glances,
Queen-like and clear,
Which the bright moon lances
From her tranquil sphere
At the sleepless waters 5
Of a lonely mere,
On the wild whirling waves, mournfully, mournfully,
Shiver and die

267 1849 Strew no more

THE VOICE

As the tears of sorrow
 Mothers have shed—
 Prayers that to-morrow
 Shall in vain be sped
 When the flower they flow for
 Lies frozen and dead—
 Fall on the throbbing brow, fall on the burning breast,
 Bringing no rest

Like bright waves that fall
 With a lifelike motion
 On the lifeless margin of the sparkling Ocean,
 A wild rose climbing up a mouldering wall—
 A gush of sunbeams through a ruin'd hall—
 Strains of glad music at a funeral—
 So sad, and with so wild a start
 To this deep-sober'd heart,
 So anxiously and painfully,
 So dearly and doubtfully,
 And oh, with such intolerable change
 Of thought, such contrast strange,
 O unforgotten voice, thy accents come,
 Like wanderers from the world's extremity,
 Unto their ancient home!

In vain, all, all in vain,
 They beat upon mine ear again,
 Those melancholy tones so sweet and still
 Those lute-like tones which in the bygone year
 Did steal into mine ear—
 Blew such a thrilling summons to my will,
 Yet could not shake it,
 Made my tost heart its very life-blood spill,
 Yet could not break it

24 1849 this long sober'd heart, 29 1849, 1877 thy whispers
 come, 35 1849 in long distant years 36 1849 mine ears
 39 1849 Dran'd all the life my full heart had to spill,

YOUTH'S AGITATIONS

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1867 and thereafter]

WHEN I shall be divorced, some ten years hence,
From this poor present self which I am now,
When youth has done its tedious vain expense
Of passions that for ever ebb and flow,

Shall I not joy youth's heats are left behind, 5
And breathe more happy in an even clime?²—
Ah no, for then I shall begin to find
A thousand virtues in this hated time!

Then I shall wish its agitations back,
And all its thwarting currents of desire, 10
Then I shall praise the heat which then I lack,
And call this hurrying fever, generous fire,

And sigh that one thing only has been lent
To youth and age in common—discontent.

THE WORLD'S TRIUMPHS

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

So far as I conceive the world's rebuke
To him address'd who would recast her new,
Not from herself her fame of strength she took,
But from their weakness who would work her rue

'Behold,' she cries, so many rages lull'd, 5
So many fiery spirits quite cool'd down,
Look how so many valours, long undull'd,
After short commerce with me, fear my frown!

YOUTH'S AGITATIONS *Title, 1852 Sonnet.*

THE WORLD'S TRIUMPHS *Title, 1852 Sonnet.*

2 MS her over it

4 MS from their baseness

THE WORLD'S TRIUMPHS

'Thou too, when thou against my crimes wouldst cry,
 Let thy foreboded homage check thy tongue!'— 10
 The world speaks well, yet might her foe reply
 'Are wills so weak?'—then let not mine wait long!
 'Hast thou so rare a poison?'—let me be
 Keener to slay thee, lest thou poison me!

STAGIRIUS³

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1855, '77, and thereafter]

THOU, who dost dwell alone—
 Thou, who dost know thine own—
 Thou, to whom all are known
 From the cradle to the grave—
 Save, oh! save 5
 From the world's temptations,
 From tribulations,
 From that fierce anguish
 Wherein we languish,
 From that torpor deep 10
 Wherein we lie asleep,
 Heavy as death, cold as the grave,
 Save, oh! save
 When the soul, growing clearer,
 Sees God no nearer, 15
 When the soul, mounting higher,
 To God comes no nigher,
 But the arch-fiend Pride
 Mounts at her side,
 Foiling her high emprise, 20
 Sealing her eagle eyes,
 9 MS Thus thou, when thou 10 MS foreboded treason
 STAGIRIUS Title, 1849 Stagyrus 1855 Desire 14-17 MS
 When the soul rising higher, to God comes no nigher—
 When the mind waxing clearer sees God no nearer—
 20 MS, 1855 emprise,

STAGIRIUS

And, when she fain would soar,
 Makes idols to adore,
 Changing the pure emotion
 Of her high devotion, 25
 To a skin-deep sense
 Of her own eloquence,
 Strong to deceive, strong to enslave—
 Save, oh! save

From the ingrain'd fashion 30
 Of this earthly nature
 That mars thy creature,
 From grief that is but passion,
 From mirth that is but feigning,
 From tears that bring no healing, 35
 From wild and weak complaining,
 Thine old strength revealing,
 Save, oh! save

From doubt, where all is double,
 Where wise men are not strong, 40
 Where comfort turns to trouble,
 Where just men suffer wrong,
 Where sorrow treads on joy,
 Where sweet things soonest cloy,
 Where faiths are built on dust, 45
 Where love is half mistrust,
 Hungry, and barren, and sharp as the sea—
 Oh! set us free

O let the false dream fly,
 Where our sick souls do lie 50
 Tossing continually!
 O where thy voice doth come
 Let all doubts be dumb,

24 MS Freezing is written above Changing as an alternative reading.
 33, 34 In the MS these two lines are transposed 37 MS Thy true
 strength 39 MS Doubts, 40 MS Where good men
 43 MS puts out joy—

STAGIRIUS

Let all words be mild,
 All strifes be reconciled, 55
 All pains beguiled!
 Light bring no blindness,
 Love no unkindness,
 Knowledge no ruin,
 Fear no undoing! 60
 From the cradle to the grave,
 Save, oh! save.

HUMAN LIFE

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1867 and thereafter]

WHAT mortal, when he saw,
 Life's voyage done, his heavenly Friend,
 Could ever yet dare tell him fearlessly
 'I have kept unfringed my nature's law,
 The inly-written chart thou gavest me, 5
 To guide me, I have steer'd by to the end'?

Ah! let us make no claim,
 On life's incognisable sea,
 To too exact a steering of our way,
 Let us not fret and fear to miss our aim, 10
 If some fair coast have lured us to make stay,
 Or some friend hail'd us to keep company

Ay! we would each fain drive
 At random, and not steer by rule
 Weakness! and worse, weakness bestow'd in vain! 15
 Winds from our side the unsuiting consort rive,
 We rush by coasts where we had lief remain,
 Man cannot, though he would, live chance's fool

No! as the foaming swath
 Of torn-up water, on the main, 20
 Falls heavily away with long-drawn roar

HUMAN LIFE II 1852-81 has lured us MS alteration (in 1881
 volume) have 19 1852, 1867 swathe

HUMAN LIFE

On either side the black deep-furrow'd path
Cut by an onward-labouring vessel's prore,
And never touches the ship-side again,

Even so we leave behind, 25
As, charter'd by some unknown Powers,
We stem across the sea of life by night,
The joys which were not for our use design'd,—
The friends to whom we had no natural right,
The homes that were not destined to be ours 30

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE

DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN

[*First published 1849 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter*]

Who taught this pleading to unpractised eyes?
Who hid such import in an infant's gloom?
Who lent thee, child, this meditative guise?
Who mass'd, round that slight brow, these clouds of doom?

27 1868, 1869 We stem across the sea by night,

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE 1-20 1869 only first stanza
cancelled, next four rewritten as follows

The port lies bright under the August sun,
Gay shine the waters and the cluster'd pier,
Blithely, this morn, old Ocean's work is done,
And blithely do these sea-birds hover near
Poor child, whom the light air of childish joy
Wafts not from thine own thoughts—of graver strain,
Surely, than those which should thine age employ—
A weight of meditation mixt with pain!
Blithe all else stirs, thou stirrest not!—averse
From thine own mother's breast, that knows not thee,
With eyes which seek thine eyes thou dost converse,
And thy dark mournful vision rests on me
Glooms that go deep as thine I have not known,
Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth!
Musings, that ere they could grow ripe were flown,
And grief that heal'd at every smile of earth

4 1855 What clouds thy forehead, and fore-dates thy doom?

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE

Lo! sails that gleam a moment and are gone, 5
The swinging waters, and the cluster'd pier
Not idly Earth and Ocean labour on,
Nor idly do these sea-birds hover near

But thou, whom superfluity of joy
Wafts not from thine own thoughts, nor longings vain, 10
Nor weariness, the full-fed soul's annoy—
Remaining in thy hunger and thy pain,

Thou, drugging pain by patience, half averse
From thine own mother's breast, that knows not thee,
With eyes which sought thine eyes thou didst converse, 15
And that soul-searching vision fell on me

Glooms that go deep as thine I have not known
Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth
Thy sorrow and thy calmness are thine own
Glooms that enhance and glorify this earth 20

What mood wears like complexion to thy woe?
His, who in mountain glens, at noon of day,
Sits rapt, and hears the battle break below?
—Ah! thine was not the shelter, but the fray.

Some exile's, mindful how the past was glad? 25
Some angel's, in an alien planet born?
—No exile's dream was ever half so sad,
Nor any angel's sorrow so forlorn

Is the calm thine of stoic souls, who weigh
Life well, and find it wanting, nor deplore, 30
But in disdainful silence turn away,
Stand mute, self-centred, stern, and dream no more?

15 1849 eyes that 21-2 1869
Whose mood shall fancy liken to thy woe?
Some dreamer's, who, far off, a summer's day,
25-6 1849, 1855 What exile's, changing bitter thoughts with glad?
What seraph's, in some alien planet born?
25 1869 his past 27 1869 Never was exile's memory half so sad,
28 1869 And never angel's

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE

Or do I wait, to hear some gray-hair'd king
Unravel all his many-colour'd lore,
Whose mind hath known all arts of governing, 35
Mused much, loved life a little, loathed it more²

Down the pale cheek long lines of shadow slope,
Which years, and curious thought, and suffering give
—Thou hast foreknown the vanity of hope,
Foreseen thy harvest—yet proceed'st to live 40

O meek anticipant of that sure pain
Whose sureness gray-hair'd scholars hardly learn!
What wonder shall time breed, to swell thy strain²
What heavens, what earth, what sun shalt thou discern²

Ere the long night, whose stillness brooks no star, 45
Match that funereal aspect with her pall,
I think, thou wilt have fathom'd life too far,
Have known too much—or else forgotten all

The Guide of our dark steps a triple veil
Betwixt our senses and our sorrow keeps, 50
Hath sown with cloudless passages the tale
Of grief, and eased us with a thousand sleeps

Ah! not the nectarous poppy lovers use,
Not daily labour's dull, Lethæan spring,
Oblivion in lost angels can infuse 55
Of the soil'd glory, and the trailing wing

And though thou glean, what strenuous gleaners may,
In the throng'd fields where winning comes by strife,
And though the just sun gild, as mortals pray,
Some reaches of thy storm-vext stream of life, 60

37-8 1869

Down thy pale cheek those lines of shadow slope,
Which years, to most, and care, and suffering, give,—

44 1849-58 what suns 55 1869 lorn angels 58 1869 In
earth's throng'd fields 59 1849-69 as all men pray,

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE

Though that blank sunshine blind thee, though the cloud
 That sever'd the world's march and thine, be gone,
 Though ease dulls grace, and Wisdom be too proud
 To halve a lodging that was all her own—
 Once, ere the day decline, thou shalt discern, 65
 Oh once, ere night, in thy success, thy chain!
 Ere the long evening close, thou shalt return,
 And wear this majesty of grief again

A QUESTION

TO FAUSTA

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1877 and thereafter]

Joy comes and goes, hope ebbs and flows
 Like the wave,
 Change doth unknit the tranquil strength of men
 Love lends life a little grace,
 A few sad smiles, and then, 5
 Both are laid in one cold place,
 In the grave
 Dreams dawn and fly, friends smile and die
 Like spring flowers,
 Our vaunted life is one long funeral 10
 Men dig graves with bitter tears
 For their dead hopes, and all,
 Mazed with doubts and sick with fears,
 Count the hours
 We count the hours! These dreams of ours, 15
 False and hollow,
 Do we go hence and find they are not dead?
 Joys we dimly apprehend,
 Faces that smiled and fled,
 Hopes born here, and born to end, 20
 Shall we follow?

62 1849, 1855 is gone 63 1869 and wisdom is 64 1869 To
 halve a house that should be all her own— 65 1869-81 Once, ere thy
 day go down, MS alteration (in 1881 volume) Once, ere the day decline,
 A QUESTION Title, 1849 To Fausta 17 1849 Shall we go

IN UTRUMQUE PARATUS

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1869 and thereafter]

If, in the silent mind of One all-pure,
At first imagined lay
The sacred world, and by procession sure
From those still deeps, in form and colour drest,
Seasons alternating, and night and day, 5
The long-mused thought to north, south, east, and west,
Took then its all-seen way,

O waking on a world which thus-wise springs!
Whether it needs thee count
Betwixt thy waking and the birth of things 10
Ages or hours—O waking on life's stream!
By lonely pureness to the all-pure fount
(Only by this thou canst) the colour'd dream
Of life remount!

Thun, thun the pleasant human noises grow, 15
And faint the city gleams,
Rare the lone pastoral huts—marvel not thou!
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams,
Alone the sun arises, and alone 20
Spring the great streams

But, if the wild unfather'd mass no birth
In divine seats hath known,
In the blank, echoing solitude if Earth,
Rocking her obscure body to and fro, 25
Ceases not from all time to heave and groan,
Unfruitful oft, and at her happiest throe
Forms, what she forms, alone,

O seeming sole to awake, thy sun-bathed head
Piercing the solemn cloud 30
Round thy still dreaming brother-world outspread!

IN UTRUMQUE PARATUS

O man, whom Earth, thy long-vest mother, bare
Not without joy—so radiant, so endow'd
(Such happy issue crown'd her painful care)—
Be not too proud!

35

Oh when most self-exalted, most alone,
Chief dreamer, own thy dream!
Thy brother-world stirs at thy feet unknown,
Who hath a monarch's hath no brother's part,
Yet doth thine inmost soul with yearning teem
—Oh, what a spasm shakes the dreamer's heart!
'I, too, but seem'

40

THE WORLD AND THE QUIETIST

TO CRITIAS

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1855, '77, and thereafter]

'WHY, when the world's great mind
Hath finally inclined,
Why,' you say, Critias, 'be debating still?
Why, with these mournful rhymes
Learn'd in more languid climes,
Blame our activity
Who, with such passionate will,
Are what we mean to be?'

5

Critias, long since, I know
(For Fate decreed it so),
Long since the world hath set its heart to live,
Long since, with credulous zeal

10

IN UTRUMQUE PARATUS 36 1869 only last stanza discarded and new ending supplied

Thy native world stirs at thy feet unknown,
Yet there thy secret lies!
Out of this stuff, these forces, thou art grown,
And proud self-severance from them were disease.
O scan thy native world with pious eyes!
High as thy life be risen, 'tis from these,
And these, too, rise.

THE WORLD AND THE QUIETIST

It turns life's mighty wheel,
Still doth for labourers send
Who still their labour give, 15
And still expects an end
Yet, as the wheel flies round,
With no ungrateful sound
Do adverse voices fall on the world's ear.
Deafen'd by his own stir 20
The rugged labourer
Caught not till then a sense
So glowing and so near
Of his omnipotence
So, when the feast grew loud 25
In Susa's palace proud,
A white-robed slave stole to the Great King's side
He spake—the Great King heard,
Felt the slow-rolling word
Swell his attentive soul, 30
Breathed deeply as it died,
And drain'd his mighty bowl

HORATIAN ECHO⁴ (TO AN AMBITIOUS FRIEND)

[Written in 1847 First published in THE CENTURY GUILD HOBBY HORSE,
July 1887 Reprinted 1890]

OMIT, omit, my simple friend,
Still to enquire how parties tend,
Or what we fix with foreign powers
If France and we are really friends,
And what the Russian Czar intends, 5
Is no concern of ours.

THE WORLD AND THE QUIETIST 27 1849, 1855 to the Monarch's side
28 1849, 1855 He spoke the Monarch heard 1877 He spoke—the
Great King heard

HORATIAN ECHO

Us not the daily quickening race
Of the invading populace
Shall draw to swell that shouldering herd,
Mourn will we not your closing hour, 10
Ye imbeciles in present power,
Doom'd, pompous, and absurd!

And let us bear, that they debate
Of all the engine-work of state,
Of commerce, laws, and policy, 15
The secrets of the world's machine,
And what the rights of man may mean,
With readier tongue than we

Only, that with no finer art
They cloak the troubles of the heart 20
With pleasant smile, let us take care,
Nor with a lighter hand dispose
Fresh garlands of this dewy rose,
To crown Eugenia's hair

Of little threads our life is spun, 25
And he spins ill, who misses one
But is thy fair Eugenia cold?
Yet Helen had an equal grace,
And Juliet's was as fair a face,
And now their years are told 30

The day approaches, when we must
Be crumbling bones and windy dust,
And scorn us as our mistress may,
Her beauty will no better be
Than the poor face she slights in thee, 35
When dawns that day, that day.

THE SECOND BEST

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1867 and thereafter]

MODERATE tasks and moderate leisure,
Quiet living, strict-kept measure
Both in suffering and in pleasure—
'Tis for this thy nature yearns

But so many books thou readest, 5
But so many schemes thou breedest,
But so many wishes feedest,
That thy poor head almost turns.

And (the world's so madly jangled,
Human things so fast entangled) 10
Nature's wish must now be strangled
For that best which she discerns

So it *must* be! yet, while leading
A strain'd life, while overfeeding,
Like the rest, his wit with reading, 15
No small profit that man earns,

Who through all he meets can steer him,
Can reject what cannot clear him,
Cling to what can truly cheer him,
Who each day more surely learns 20

That an impulse, from the distance
Of his deepest, best existence,
To the words, 'Hope, Light, Persistence,'
Strongly sets and truly burns

13 1852 So it must be 24 1852-68 Strongly stirs

CONSOLATION

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

Mist clogs the sunshine Smoky dwarf houses Hem me round everywhere; A vague dejection Weighs down my soul	5
Yet, while I languish, Everywhere countless Prospects unroll themselves, And countless beings Pass countless moods	10
Far hence, in Asia, On the smooth convent-roofs, On the gilt terraces, Of holy Lassa, Bright shines the sun	15
Grey time-worn marbles Hold the pure Muses, In their cool gallery, By yellow Tiber, They still look fair	20
Strange unloved uproar* Shrills round their portal, Yet not on Helicon Kept they more cloudless Their noble calm	25

* Written during the siege of Rome by the French, 1849 [M. A.]
1853, 1854 *these lines printed as a motto to the poem*

The wide earth is still
Wider than one man's passion there's no mood,
No meditation, no delight, no sorrow,
Cas'd in one man's dimensions, can distil
Such pregnant and infectious quality,
Six yards round shall not ring it —

13 1852-81 gold terraces,

CONSOLATION

Through sun-proof alleys In a lone, sand-hemm'd City of Africa, A blind, led beggar, Age-bow'd, asks alms.	30
No bolder robber Erst abode ambush'd Deep in the sandy waste, No clearer eyesight Spied prey afar	35
Saharan sand-winds Sear'd his keen eyeballs, Spent is the spoil he won. For him the present Holds only pain	40
Two young, fair lovers, Where the warm June-wind, Fresh from the summer fields Plays fondly round them, Stand, tranced in joy	45
With sweet, join'd voices, And with eyes brimming 'Ah,' they cry, 'Destiny, Prolong the present! Time, stand still here!'	50
The prompt stern Goddess Shakes her head, frowning, Time gives his hour-glass Its due reversal, Their hour is gone	55
With weak indulgence, Did the just Goddess Lengthen their happiness, She lengthen'd also Distress elsewhere	60

CONSOLATION

The hour, whose happy Unalloy'd moments I would eternalise, Ten thousand mourners Well pleased see end	65
The bleak, stern hour, Whose severe moments I would annihilate, Is pass'd by others In warmth, light, joy	70
Time, so complain'd of, Who to no one man Shows partiality, Brings round to all men * Some undimm'd hours	75

RESIGNATION

TO FAUSTA

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter.]

<i>To die be given us, or attain' Fierce work it were, to do again So pilgrims, bound for Mecca, pray'd At burning noon, so warriors said, Scar'd with the cross, who watch'd the miles Of dust which wreathed their struggling files Down Lydian mountains, so, when snows Round Alpine summits, eddying rose, The Goth, bound Rome-wards, so the Hun, Crouch'd on his saddle, while the sun Went lurid down o'er flooded plains Through which the groaning Danube strains To the drear Euxine,—so pray all, Whom labours, self-ordain'd, enthrall,</i>	10
--	----

RESIGNATION 6 1849-77 dust that 10 1849-69 when the sun

RESIGNATION

Because they to themselves propose 15
 On this side the all-common close
 A goal which, gain'd, may give repose
 So pray they, and to stand again
 Where they stood once, to them were pain,
 Pain to thread back and to renew 20
 Past straits, and currents long steer'd through

But milder natures, and more free—
 Whom an unblamed serenity
 Hath freed from passions, and the state
 Of struggle these necessitate, 25
 Whom schooling of the stubborn mind
 Hath made, or birth hath found, resign'd—
 These mourn not, that their goings pay
 Obedience to the passing day
 These claim not every laughing Hour 30
 For handmaid to their striding power,
 Each in her turn, with torch uprear'd,
 To await their march, and when appear'd,
 Through the cold gloom, with measured race,
 To usher for a destined space 35
 (Her own sweet errands all forgone)
 The too imperious traveller on
 These, Fausta, ask not this, nor thou,
 Time's chafing prisoner, ask it now!

We left, just ten years since, you say, 40
 That wayside inn we left to-day⁵
 Our jovial host, as forth we fare,
 Shouts greeting from his easy chair.
 High on a bank our leader stands,
 Reviews and ranks his motley bands, 45
 Makes clear our goal to every eye—
 The valley's western boundary
 A gate swings to! our tide hath flow'd
 Already from the silent road
 The valley-pastures, one by one, 50

RESIGNATION

Once more we tread this self-same road,
 Fausta, which ten years since we trod,
 Alone we tread it, you and I,
 Ghosts of that boisterous company
 Here, where the brook shines, near its head, 90
 In its clear, shallow, turf-fringed bed,
 Here, whence the eye first sees, far down,
 Capp'd with faint smoke, the noisy town,
 Here sit we, and again unroll,
 Though slowly, the familiar whole 95
 The solemn wastes of heathy hill
 Sleep in the July sunshine still,
 The self-same shadows now, as then,
 Play through this grassy upland glen,
 The loose dark stones on the green way 100
 Lie strewn, it seems, where then they lay,
 On this mild bank above the stream,
 (You crush them!) the blue gentians gleam
 Still this wild brook, the rushes cool,
 The sailing foam, the shining pool! 105
 These are not changed, and we, you say,
 Are scarce more changed, in truth, than they

The gipsies, whom we met below,
 They, too, have long roam'd to and fro,
 They ramble, leaving, where they pass, 110
 Their fragments on the cumber'd grass.
 And often to some kindly place
 Chance guides the migratory race,
 Where, though long wanderings intervene,
 They recognise a former scene 115
 The dingy tents are pitch'd, the fires
 Give to the wind their wavering spires,
 In dark knots crouch round the wild flame
 Their children, as when first they came,
 They see their shackled beasts again 120
 Move, browsing, up the gray-wall'd lane

RESIGNATION

Signs are not wanting, which might raise
 The ghost in them of former days—
 Signs are not wanting, if they would,
 Suggestions to disquietude 125
 For them, for all, time's busy touch,
 While it mends little, troubles much
 Their joints grow stiffer—but the year
 Runs his old round of dubious cheer,
 Chilly they grow—yet winds in March, 130
 Still, sharp as ever, freeze and parch,
 They must live still—and yet, God knows,
 Crowded and keen the country grows,
 It seems as if, in their decay,
 The law grew stronger every day 135
 So might they reason, so compare,
 Fausta, times past with times that are
 But no!—they rubb'd through yesterday
 In their hereditary way,
 And they will rub through, if they can, 140
 To-morrow on the self-same plan,
 Till death arrive to supersede,
 For them, vicissitude and need.

The poet, to whose mighty heart
 Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart, 145
 Subdues that energy to scan
 Not his own course, but that of man
 Though he move mountains, though his day
 Be pass'd on the proud heights of sway,
 Though he hath loosed a thousand chains, 150
 Though he hath borne immortal pains,
 Action and suffering though he know—
 He hath not lived, if he lives so
 He sees, in some great-historied land,
 A ruler of the people stand, 155
 Sees his strong thought in fiery flood

123 1849-69 The ghosts

142 1849-69. Till death arrives

RESIGNATION

Roll through the heaving multitude,
 Exults—yet for no moment's space
 Envies the all-regarded place
 Beautiful eyes meet his—and he 160
 Bears to admire uncravingly,
 They pass—he, mingled with the crowd,
 Is in their far-off triumphs proud
 From some high station he looks down,
 At sunset, on a populous town, 165
 Surveys each happy group, which fleets,
 Toil ended, through the shining streets,
 Each with some errand of its own—
 And does not say *I am alone*
 He sees the gentle stir of birth 170
 When morning purifies the earth,
 He leans upon a gate and sees
 The pastures, and the quiet trees
 Low, woody hill, with gracious bound,
 Folds the still valley almost round, 175
 The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
 Is answer'd from the depth of dawn,
 In the hedge straggling to the stream,
 Pale, dew-drench'd, half-shut roses gleam,
 But, where the farther side slopes down, 180
 He sees the drowsy new-waked clown
 In his white quaint-embroider'd frock
 Make, whistling, tow'rd his mist-wreathed flock—
 Slowly, behind his heavy tread,
 The wet, flower'd grass heaves up its head 185
 Lean'd on his gate, he gazes—tears
 Are in his eyes, and in his ears
 The murmur of a thousand years.
 Before him he sees life unroll,
 A placid and continuous whole— 190

166 1849, 1855 that fleets, 180 1849-69 further
 183 1849, 1855 towards 1869-81 toward 184 1849, 1855 the
 heavy tread

RESIGNATION

That general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace,
That life, whose dumb wish is not miss'd
If birth proceeds, if things subsist,
The life of plants, and stones, and rain, 195
The life he craves—if not in vain
Fate gave, what chance shall not control,
His sad lucidity of soul

You listen—but that wandering smile,
Fausta, betrays you cold the while! 200

Your eyes pursue the bells of foam
Wash'd, eddying, from this bank, their home.
Those gipsies, so your thoughts I scan,
Are less, the poet more, than man
They feel not, though they move and see, 205
Deeper the poet feels, but he

Breathes, when he will, immortal air,
Where Orpheus and where Homer are
In the day's life, whose iron round
Hems us all in, he is not bound, 210

He leaves his kind, o'erleaps their pen,
And flees the common life of men
He escapes thence, but we abide—
Not deep the poet sees, but wide

The world in which we live and move 215
Outlasts aversion, outlasts love,
Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
Remorse, grief, joy,—and were the scope
Of these affections wider made,
Man still would see, and see dismay'd, 220
Beyond his passion's widest range,
Far regions of eternal change
Nay, and since death, which wipes out man,
Finds him with many an unsolved plan,

206 1849-77 *Deeply the Poet*
1881

211, 212 *These lines were added in*

RESIGNATION

With much unknown, and much untried, 225
 Wonder not dead, and thirst not dried,
 Still gazing on the ever full
 Eternal mundane spectacle—
 This world in which we draw our breath,
 In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death 230
 Blame thou not, therefore, him who dares
 Judge vain beforehand human cares,
 Whose natural insight can discern
 What through experience others learn,
 Who needs not love and power, to know 235
 Love transient, power an unreal show,
 Who treads at ease life's uncheer'd ways—
 Him blame not, Fausta, rather praise!
 Rather thyself for some aim pray
 Nobler than this, to fill the day, 240
 Rather that heart, which burns in thee,
 Ask, not to amuse, but to set free,
 Be passionate hopes not ill resign'd
 For quiet, and a fearless mind
 And though fate grudge to thee and me 245
 The poet's rapt security,
 Yet they, believe me, who await
 No gifts from chance, have conquer'd fate.
 They, winning room to see and hear,
 And to men's business not too near, 250
 Through clouds of individual strife
 Draw homeward to the general life
 Like leaves by suns not yet uncurl'd,
 To the wise, foolish, to the world,
 Weak,—yet not weak, I might reply, 255
 Not foolish, Fausta, in His eye,
 To whom each moment in its race,
 Crowd as we will its neutral space,
 Is but a quiet watershed

252 1849, 1855 homewards 257 1849 Each moment as it flies,
 to whom, 258 1849 its neutral room,

RESIGNATION

Whence, equally, the seas of life and death are fed 260

Enough, we live!—and if a life,
 With large results so little rife,
 Though bearable, seem hardly worth
 This pomp of worlds, this pain of birth,
 Yet, Fausta, the mute turf we tread, 265
 The solemn hills around us spread,
 This stream which falls incessantly,
 The strange-scrawl'd rocks, the lonely sky,
 If I might lend their life a voice,
 Seem to bear rather than rejoice 270
 And even could the intemperate prayer
 Man iterates, while these forbear,
 For movement, for an ampler sphere,
 Pierce Fate's impenetrable ear,
 Not milder is the general lot 275
 Because our spirits have forgot,
 In action's dizzying eddy whirl'd,
 The something that infects the world.

267 1849, 1855 stream that

NARRATIVE POEMS

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM ⁶

AN EPISODE

[First published 1853 Reprinted 1854, '57, '69, and thereafter]

AND the first grey of morning fill'd the east,
 And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream
 But all the Tartar camp along the stream
 Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep,
 Sohrab alone, he slept not, all night long 5
 He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed,
 But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,
 He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
 And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
 And went abroad into the cold wet fog, 10
 Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent
 Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
 Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
 Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
 When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere, 15
 Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
 And to a hillock came, a little back
 From the stream's brink—the spot where first a boat,
 Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land
 The men of former times had crown'd the top 20
 With a clay fort, but that was fall'n, and now
 The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
 A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread
 And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
 Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent, 25
 And found the old man sleeping on his bed
 Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms

1 MS rays of morning streak'd cancelled 10 MS cold dim
 air cancelled 11 MS hush'd camp 19 MS meets the land
 cancelled

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
 Was dull'd, for he slept light, an old man's sleep,
 And he rose quickly on one arm, and said — 30
 'Who art thou?' for it is not yet clear dawn
 Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?'
 But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said —
 'Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
 The sun is not yet risen, and the foe 35
 Sleep, but I sleep not, all night long I lie
 Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee
 For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
 Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
 In Samarcand, before the army march'd, 40
 And I will tell thee what my heart desires
 Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
 I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
 I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
 At my boy's years, the courage of a man 45
 Thus too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
 The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
 And beat the Persians back on every field,
 I seek one man, one man, and one alone—
 Rustum, my father, who I hoped should greet, 50
 Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
 His not unworthy, not inglorious son
 So I long hoped, but him I never find
 Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
 Let the two armies rest to-day, but I 55
 Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
 To meet me, man to man, if I prevail,
 Rustum will surely hear it, if I fall—
 Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
 Dim is the rumour, of a common fight, 60
 Where host meets host, and many names are sunk,
 But of a single combat fame speaks clear'

42 1853, 1854 Thou knowest After 59 MS But I shall conquer, that
 my heart forebodes cancelled

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

He spoke, and Peran-Wisa took the hand
 Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said —
 'O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine! 65
 Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
 And share the battle's common chance with us
 Who love thee, but must press for ever first,
 In single fight incurring single risk,
 To find a father thou hast never seen? 70
 That were far best, my son, to stay with us
 Unmurmuring, in our tents, while it is war,
 And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns
 But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
 To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight! 75
 Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
 O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
 But far hence seek him, for he is not here
 For now it is not as when I was young,
 When Rustum was in front of every fray, 80
 But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
 In Seistan, with Zal, his father old
 Whether that his own mighty strength at last
 Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age,
 Or in some quarrel with the Persian King 85
 There go!—Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
 Danger or death awaits thee on this field
 Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
 To us, fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
 To seek thy father, not seek single fights 90
 In vain,—but who can keep the lion's cub
 From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
 Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires'
 So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
 His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay, 95
 And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat

71-3 First inserted in 1854
 desire rules all,
 the MS

74 1853 Or, if indeed this one
 86-7 MS These two lines were a later insertion in

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
 And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
 In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword,
 And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap, 100
 Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul,
 And raised the curtain of his tent, and call'd
 His herald to his side, and went abroad
 The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
 From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands 105
 And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
 Into the open plain, so Haman bade—
 Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
 The host, and still was in his lusty prime
 From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd, 110
 As when some grey November morn the files,
 In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
 Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
 Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
 Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, southward bound 115
 For the warm Persian sea-board—so they stream'd
 The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
 First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
 Large men, large steeds, who from Bokhara come
 And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares 120
 Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
 The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
 And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands,
 Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
 The acrid milk of camels, and their wells 125
 And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
 From far, and a more doubtful service own'd,
 The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
 Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
 And close-set skull-caps, and those wilder hordes 130

100-1 *These two lines were a later insertion in the MS* 100 *MS*,
 1853-7 he plac'd 104 *MS* By this the sun 117 *MS* Tartars
 of Bokhara cancelled

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
 Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
 Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
 Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere,
 These all filed out from camp into the plain 135
 And on the other side the Persians form'd,—
 First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
 The Ilyats of Khorassan, and behind,
 The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
 Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel 140
 But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
 Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
 And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks
 And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
 That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back, 145
 He took his spear, and to the front he came,
 And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood
 And the old Tartar came upon the sand
 Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said —
 'Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear! 150
 Let there be truce between the hosts to-day
 But choose a champion from the Persian lords
 To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man'
 As, in the country, on a morn in June,
 When the dew glistens on the pearled ears, 155
 A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—
 So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
 A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
 Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
 But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool, 160
 Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,

131 MS *The first phrase read successively, come from Kipchak, dwell in Kipchak, rove o'er Kipchak, and, at last, roam o'er* 132 1853-7
 unkemp'd 142 MS *Swift through the Tartar, swift above slow deleted*
 148 MS *the old Tartar deleted for Peran Wisa, then original reading restored* 149 MS *and spoke* 151 1881 *Let their [sic]*
 161 MS *Wind deleted for Climb*

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow,
 Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
 Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
 Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves 165
 Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—
 In single file they move, and stop their breath,
 For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—
 So the pale Persians held their breath with fear
 And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up 170
 To counsel, Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
 And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
 Second, and was the uncle of the King,
 These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said —
 'Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up, 175
 Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
 He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart
 But Rustum came last night, aloof he sits
 And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart
 Him will I seek, and carry to his ear 180
 The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name
 Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight
 Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up '
 So spake he, and Ferood stood forth and cried —
 'Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said! 185
 Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man '
 He spake and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
 Back through the opening squadrons to his tent
 But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
 And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd, 190
 Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents
 Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,

163 MS, 1853-77 Winding so high 163-6 MS These four lines,
 a later insertion, written on the right-hand margin 167 MS In single
 file they pass *deleted for* In single file they wind, then *deleted for the present*
reading 168 MS oer' [sic] inserted later 178 MS Rustum
deleted for Rostom, then original spelling restored And so regularly hereafter
 in MS 184 1853-69 stood forth and said — 187 1853-69
 He spoke

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Just pitch'd, the high pavilion in the midst
 Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around
 And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found 195
 Rustum, his morning meal was done, but still
 The table stood before him, charged with food—
 A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
 And dark green melons, and there Rustum sate
 Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist, 200
 And play'd with it, but Gudurz came and stood
 Before him, and he look'd, and saw him stand,
 And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
 And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said —
 'Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight 205
 What news?' but sit down first, and eat and drink'
 But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said —
 'Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,
 But not to-day, to-day has other needs
 The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze, 210
 For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
 To pick a champion from the Persian lords
 To fight their champion—and thou know'st his name—
 Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid
 O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's! 215
 He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart,
 And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
 Or else too weak, and all eyes turn to thee
 Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!'
 He spoke, but Rustum answer'd with a smile — 220
 'Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
 Am older, if the young are weak, the King
 Errs strangely, for the King, for Kai Khosroo,
 Himself is young, and honours younger men,
 And lets the aged moulder to their graves 225
 Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—

193 MS New pitch'd cancelled 197 MS, 1853-7 stood beside him
 197 MS with cates deleted for present reading 198 MS cakes over
 loaves deleted 216 MS hath deleted for has

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I
 For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?²
 For would that I myself had such a son,
 And not that one slight helpless girl I have— 230
 A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
 And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
 My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
 And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
 And he has none to guard his weak old age 235
 There would I go, and hang my armour up,
 And with my great name fence that weak old man,
 And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
 And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
 And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings, 240
 And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more³
 He spoke, and smiled, and Gudurz made reply —
 'What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
 When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
 Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks, 245
 Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say
*Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
 And shuns to peril it with younger men*⁴
 And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply —
 'O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words? 250
 Thou knowest better words than this to say
 What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
 Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?⁵
 Are not they mortal, am not I myself?⁶
 But who for men of nought would do great deeds? 255
 Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
 But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms,

218 MS What irks it me that men speak Sohrab's praise? *deleted, then half a line written above, I am not wrong'd when, deleted, then, on next page, at top, For what care I, that Sohrab's fame quench theirs? Then deleted, and, below, after the comma, the present reading* 231 MS A son so prais'd, *deleted for A son so fam'd, then A son so prais'd [?], then, fam'd restored*
 232 MS white-hair'd Zal cancelled 234 MS borders round cancelled
 236 MS would I stay, cancelled

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man'

He spoke, and frown'd, and Gudurz turn'd, and ran 260
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy—

Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel, the arms he chose 265

Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume
So arm'd, he issued forth, and Ruksh, his horse, 270
Follow'd him like a faithful hound at heel—

Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home, 275

And rear'd him, a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd 280

The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd, but the Tartars knew not who he was
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore, 285

By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,

262 MS and joy, cancelled 275 MS beside its dam, cancelled

276 MS train'd him, cancelled 280 MS Rustum issued forth cancelled

284 MS wet fisher cancelled 285 MS weeps ashore, cancelled.

286 MS At twilight, on a stormy eve in March, cancelled 287-8 MS

Running fast homeward with the turn of tide

Beaches the pinnacle in a darkening cove

deleted for the present passage, which is written in above the respective lines

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
 So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came 290
 And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,
 And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came
 And as afield the reapers cut a swath
 Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
 And on each side are squares of standing corn, 295
 And in the midst a stubble, short and bare—
 So on each side were squares of men, with spears
 Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand
 And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
 His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw 300
 Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came
 As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
 Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
 Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—
 At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn, 305
 When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes—
 And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
 Of that poor drudge may be, so Rustum eyed
 The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
 Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth 310
 All the most valiant chiefs, long he perused
 His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was
 For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd,
 Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
 Which in a queen's secluded garden throws 315
 Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
 By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—
 So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd
 And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
 As he beheld him coming, and he stood, 320
 And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said —
 'O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,

293 *MS*, 1853-7 swathe 300 1853-69 towards 302 *MS*
 rich lady cancelled 309 *MS* who through the world cancelled
 310 *MS* Went seeking cancelled 312 *MS* His face and air cancelled

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

And warm, and pleasant, but the grave is cold!
 Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave
 Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron, 325
 And tried, and I have stood on many a field
 Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe—
 Never was that field lost, or that foe saved
 O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
 Be govern'd! quit the Tartar host, and come 330
 To Iran, and be as my son to me,
 And fight beneath my banner till I die!
 There are no youths in Iran brave as thou'
 So he spake, mildly, Sohrab heard his voice,
 The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw 335
 His giant figure planted on the sand,
 Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
 Hath builded on the waste in former years
 Against the robbers, and he saw that head,
 Streak'd with its first grey hairs,—hope filled his soul, 340
 And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
 And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said —
 'O, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
 Art thou not Rustum? speak! art thou not he?'
 But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth, 345
 And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul —
 'Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
 False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys
 For if I now confess this thing he asks,
 And hide it not, but say *Rustum is here!* 350
 He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
 But he will find some pretext not to fight,
 And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
 A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way
 And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall, 355

338 MS Hath *deleted* for Has 1853-7 Has builded MS former
 days cancelled 341 1853-7 forwards 346 1853-69 spoke
 to his 352 MS Then will he find *cancelled* 355 1853-4 on a
 feast day

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

In Samarcand, he will arise and cry
 "I challenged once, when the two armies camp'd
 Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
 To cope with me in single fight, but they
 Shrank, only Rustum dared, then he and I 360
 Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away "
 So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud,
 Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me '
 And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud —
 'Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus 365
 Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
 By challenge forth, make good thy vaunt, or yield!
 Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
 Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
 For well I know, that did great Rustum stand 370
 Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
 There would be then no talk of fighting more
 But being what I am, I tell thee this—
 Do thou record it in thine inmost soul
 Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield, 375
 Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
 Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
 Oxus in summer wash them all away '
 He spoke, and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet —
 'Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so! 380
 I am no girl, to be made pale by words
 Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
 Here on this field, there were no fighting then
 But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here
 Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I, 385
 And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—
 But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven
 And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
 Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know
 For we are all, like swimmers in the sea, 390
 Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
 Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death, 395
We know not, and no search will make us know,
Only the event will teach us in its hour'

He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear, down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk, 400

That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet, Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash, the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide,—then Sohrab threw 405

In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield, sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield, an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough—like those which men in treeless plains 410

To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs—so huge 415

The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke, but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell 420

To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand,
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay

408 MS Then cancelled

1881 and unlopp'd [sic]

MS men who dwell in treeless plains cancelled

1853-69 Has

the sand cancelled

409 MS it was, still rough cancelled

410 MS Still rough inserted above

411 MS To saw them

414 MS Hath deleted for Has inserted above

415 MS so rough cancelled

421 MS grasp'd

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand,
 But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword, 425
 But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said —
 'Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
 Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones
 But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I,
 No, when I see thee, wiath forsakes my soul 430
 Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum, be it so!
 Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
 Boy as I am, I have seen battles too—
 Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
 And heard their hollow roar of dying men, 435
 But never was my heart thus touch'd before
 Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
 O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
 Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
 And make a truce, and sit upon this sand, 440
 And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
 And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds
 There are enough foes in the Persian host,
 Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang,
 Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou 445
 Mayst fight, fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
 But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!
 He ceased, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
 And stood erect, trembling with rage, his club
 He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear, 450
 Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
 Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
 The baleful sign of fevers, dust had soil'd
 His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms
 His breast heaved, his lips foam'd, and twice his voice 455
 Was choked with rage, at last these words broke way —
 'Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
 Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!

425 MS drew his sword *cancelled*

446 MS, 1853-7 *no italics*

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
 Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now 460
 With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance,
 But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
 Of battle, and with me, who make no play
 Of war, I fight it out, and hand to hand
 Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine! 465
 Remember all thy valour, try thy feints
 And cunning! all the pity I had is gone,
 Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
 With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles '
 He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts, 470
 And he too drew his sword, at once they rush'd
 Together, as two eagles on one prey
 Come rushing down together from the clouds,
 One from the east, one from the west, their shields
 Dash'd with a clang together, and a din 475
 Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
 Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
 Of hewing axes, crashing trees—such blows
 Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd
 And you would say that sun and stars took part 480
 In that unnatural conflict, for a cloud
 Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
 Over the fighters' heads, and a wind rose
 Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
 And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair 485
 In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone,
 For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
 Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
 And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream
 But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes 490
 And labouring breath, first Rustum struck the shield
 Which Sohrab held stiff out, the steel-spiked spear

477 MS forest's depth
 swept the plain,
 held advanc'd

484 MS Eddying and moaning round, and
 488 MS bright daylight 492 MS
 spiked struck out, but written in again above

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
 And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan
 Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm, 495
 Nor clove its steel quite through, but all the crest
 He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
 Never till now defiled, sank to the dust,
 And Rustum bow'd his head, but then the gloom
 Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air, 500
 And lightnings rent the cloud, and Ruksh, the horse,
 Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry,—
 No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
 Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
 Hath trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side, 505
 And comes at night to die upon the sand
 The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
 And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream
 But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
 And struck again, and again Rustum bow'd 510
 His head, but this time all the blade, like glass,
 Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
 And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone
 Then Rustum raised his head, his dreadful eyes
 Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear, 515
 And shouted *Rustum!*—Sohrab heard that shout,
 And shrank amazed, back he recoil'd one step,
 And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form,
 And then he stood bewilder'd, and he dropp'd
 His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side 520
 He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground,
 And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
 And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all

493 *MS* but miss'd, *deleted for fail'd, which is struck out, then written in again*
 498 *MS* never defac'd till now, sham'd to the dust
 1853-7 sunk to 500 *MS* Grew deeper, thunder crash'd along the sky,
 505 1853-81 Has trail'd 508 *MS* as it reach'd 509 *MS* but
 sprang on 513 1853-7 in his hand 517 *MS* one pace,
 521 1853-7 sunk to the ground

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

The cloud, and the two armies saw the pair—
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand 525

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began —
‘Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab’s tent 530

Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame, 535
To glad thy father in his weak old age
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old ’

And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied — 540
‘Unknown thou art, yet thy fierce vaunt is vain
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart

For were I match’d with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was, 545
They should be lying here, I standing there
But that belovéd name unnerved my arm—

That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall, and thy spear transfix’d an unarm’d foe 550
And now thou boastest, and insult’st my fate

But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear:
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!’ 555

As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,

544-5 1853-77

For were I match’d with ten such men as thou,
And I were he who till to-day I was,

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
 And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
 And follow'd her to find her where she fell 560
 Far off,—anon her mate comes winging back
 From hunting, and a great way off descries
 His huddling young left sole, at that, he checks
 His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
 Circles above his eyry, with loud screams 565
 Chiding his mate back to her nest, but she
 Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
 In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
 A heap of fluttering feathers—never more
 Shall the lake glass her, flying over it, 570
 Never the black and dripping precipices
 Echo her stormy scream as she sails by—
 As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
 So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
 Over his dying son, and knew him not 575
 But, with a cold incredulous voice, he said —
 'What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
 The mighty Rustum never had a son'
 And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied —
 'Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I 580
 Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
 Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
 Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here,
 And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
 To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee 585
 Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
 What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?
 Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
 Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
 My mother, who in Ader-bajan dwells 590
 With that old king, her father, who grows grey
 With age, and rules over the valiant Koords
 Her most I pity, who no more will see
 576 1881 (only) And, with a cold

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
 With spoils and honour, when the war is done 595
 But a dark rumour will be bruted up,
 From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear,
 And then will that defenceless woman learn
 That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more,
 But that in battle with a nameless foe, 600
 By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain '

He spoke, and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
 Thinking of her he left, and his own death
 He spoke, but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought
 Nor did he yet believe it was his son 605
 Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew,
 For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
 Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
 Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—
 So that sad mother sent him word, for fear 610
 Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms
 And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
 By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son,
 Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame
 So deem'd he, yet he listen'd, plunged in thought 615
 And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
 Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore
 At the full moon, tears gather'd in his eyes,
 For he remember'd his own early youth,
 And all its bounding rapture, as, at dawn, 620
 The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
 A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
 Through many rolling clouds—so Rustum saw
 His youth, saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom,
 And that old king, her father, who loved well 625
 His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
 With joy, and all the pleasant life they led,
 They three, in that long-distant summer-time—
 The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt

611 1853-69 take the boy

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

And hound, and morn on those delightful hills 630
 In Ader-baijan And he saw that youth,
 Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
 Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
 Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
 Of an unskilful gardener has been cut, 635
 Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
 And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
 On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,
 Lovely in death, upon the common sand
 And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said — 640
 ‘O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
 Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved
 Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
 Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum’s son
 For Rustum had no son, one child he had— 645
 But one—a girl, who with her mother now
 Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
 Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war’
 But Sohrab answer’d him in wrath, for now
 The anguish of the deep-fix’d spear grew fierce, 650
 And he desired to draw forth the steel,
 And let the blood flow free, and so to die—
 But first he would convince his stubborn foe,
 And, rising sternly on one arm, he said —
 ‘Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?’ 655
 Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
 And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine
 I tell thee, prick’d upon this arm I bear
 That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
 That she might prick it on the babe she bore ’ 660
 He spoke, and all the blood left Rustum’s cheeks,
 And his knees totter’d, and he smote his hand
 Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
 That the hard iron corslet clank’d aloud,
 And to his heart he press’d the other hand, 665
 And in a hollow voice he spake, and said —

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

'Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son'

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm, 670

And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points

Prick'd, as a cunning workman, in Pekin,

Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,

An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints, 675

And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp

Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—

So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd

On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal

It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal, 680

Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,

A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks,

Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and loved—

Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign

And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,

And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes, 685

And then he touch'd it with his hand and said —

'How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign

Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?'

He spoke, but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood

Speechless, and then he utter'd one sharp cry 690

O boy—thy father!—and his voice choked there

And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,

And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.

But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast

His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips, 695

And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,

Trying to call him back to life, and life

Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,

And they stood wide with horror, and he seized

In both his hands the dust which lay around, 700

And threw it on his head, and smurch'd his hair,—

684 1853-77 that figure

693 1853-7 sunk down

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms,
 And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
 And his sobs choked him, and he clutch'd his sword,
 To draw it, and for ever let life out 705
 But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
 And with a soothing voice he spake, and said —
 'Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
 The doom which at my birth was written down
 In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand 710
 Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
 When first I saw thee, and thy heart spoke too,
 I know it! but fate trod those promptings down
 Under its iron heel, fate, fate engaged
 The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear 715
 But let us speak no more of this! I find
 My father, let me feel that I have found!
 Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
 My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
 And wash them with thy tears, and say *My son!* 720
 Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
 And swift, for like the lightning to this field
 I came, and like the wind I go away—
 Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind
 But it was writ in Heaven that this should be ' 725
 So said he, and his voice released the heart
 Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth, he cast
 His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
 And kiss'd him And awe fell on both the hosts,
 When they saw Rustum's grief, and Ruksh, the horse, 730
 With his head bowing to the ground and mane
 Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
 First to the one then to the other moved
 His head, as if inquiring what their grief
 Might mean, and from his dark, compassionate eyes, 735
 The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand
 But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said —
 707 1853-77 he spoke 709 1853-69 doom that

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

'Ruksh, now thou grieve'st, but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this field!'

740

But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said,—
'Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!

745

O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I,
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah, and the aged Zal himself

750

Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said *O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!*—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,

755

Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream,
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,

760

Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents, and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir, and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die'

765

Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd —
'Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!

770

739 1853-7 Should then have rotted on thy nimble joints, 1869-

81 Should then have rotted on their nimble joints, 740 1853-78,

1881 When first they bore 1885 Or ere they brought (as in present
reading) 767 1853-77 And, with a heavy groan, Rustum replied —

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied —
 'Desire not that, my father! thou must live
 For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
 As some are born to be obscured, and die
 Do thou the deeds I die too young to do, 775
 And reap a second glory in thine age,
 Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine
 But come! thou seest this great host of men
 Which follow me, I pray thee, slay not these!
 Let me entreat for them, what have they done? 780
 They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star
 Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace
 But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
 But carry me with thee to Seistan,
 And place me on a bed, and mourn for me, 785
 Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends
 And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
 And heap a stately mound above my bones,
 And plant a far-seen pillar over all
 That so the passing horseman on the waste 790
 May see my tomb a great way off, and cry
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!
 And I be not forgotten in my grave'
 And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied — 795
 'Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
 So shall it be, for I will burn my tents,
 And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
 And carry thee away to Seistan,
 And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee, 800
 With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends
 And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
 And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
 And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
 And men shall not forget thee in thy grave 805
 And I will spare thy host, yea, let them go!

771 1853-77 And, with 791 1853-69 and say

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
 What should I do with slaying any more?
 For would that all whom I have ever slain
 Might be once more alive, my bitterest foes, 810
 And they who were call'd champions in their time,
 And through whose death I won that fame I have—
 And I were nothing but a common man,
 A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
 So thou mightest live too, my son, my son! 815
 Or rather would that I, even I myself,
 Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
 Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
 Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou,
 And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan, 820
 And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine,
 And say *O son, I weep thee not too sore,
 For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!*
 But now in blood and battles was my youth,
 And full of blood and battles is my age, 825
 And I shall never end this life of blood '
 Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied —
 'A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
 But thou shalt yet have peace, only not now,
 Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day, 830
 When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
 Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
 Returning home over the salt blue sea,
 From laying thy dear master in his grave '
 And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said — 835
 'Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
 Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure '
 He spoke, and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
 The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
 His wound's imperious anguish, but the blood 840
 Came welling from the open gash, and life

809 1890 (only) all that I have ever slain 818 In 1854 the word
 of was inadvertently dropped 835 1853-7 gazed on

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Flow'd with the stream,—all down his cold white side
 The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
 Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
 Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank, 845
 By children whom their nurses call with haste
 Indoors from the sun's eye, his head droop'd low,
 His limbs grew slack, motionless, white, he lay—
 White, with eyes closed, only when heavy gasps,
 Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame, 850
 Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,
 And fix'd them feebly on his father's face,
 Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
 Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
 Regretting the warm mansion which it left, 855
 And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world
 So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead,
 And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
 Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son
 As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd 860
 By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
 His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
 Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
 So in the sand lay Rustum by his son
 And night came down over the solemn waste, 865
 And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
 And darken'd all, and a cold fog, with night,
 Crept from the Oxus Soon a hum arose,
 As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
 Began to twinkle through the fog, for now 870
 Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal,
 The Persians took it on the open sands
 Southward, the Tartars by the river marge,
 And Rustum and his son were left alone.
 But the majestic river floated on, 875

843 1853 torrent pour'd, 846 1853-77 By romping children
 whom their nurses call 847 1853-7 From the hot fields at noon
 1869 From the hot field at noon

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon,—he flow'd
Right for the polar star, past Orgunje, 880
Brimming, and bright, and large, then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents, that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles— 885
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright 890
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1855, 1869, and thereafter]

Hussein

O MOST just Vizier, send away
The cloth-merchants, and let them be,
Them and their dues, this day! the King
Is ill at ease, and calls for thee

The Vizier

O merchants, tarry yet a day 5
Here in Bokhara! but at noon,
To-morrow, come, and ye shall pay
Each fortieth web of cloth to me,
As the law is, and go your way
O Hussein, lead me to the King! 10
Thou teller of sweet tales, thine own,

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

Ferdousi's, and the others', lead!
How is it with my lord?

Hussein

Alone,
Ever since prayer-time, he doth wait,
O Vizier! without lying down, 15
In the great window of the gate,
Looking into the Registràn,
Where through the sellers' booths the slaves
Are thus way bringing the dead man —
O Vizier, here is the King's door! 20

The King

O Vizier, I may bury him?

The Vizier

O King, thou know'st, I have been sick
These many days, and heard no thing
(For Allah shut my ears and mind),
Not even what thou dost, O King! 25
Wherefore, that I may counsel thee,
Let Hussein, if thou wilt, make haste
To speak in order what hath chanced

The King

O Vizier, be it as thou say'st!

Hussein

Three days since, at the time of prayer 30
A certain Moollah, with his robe
All rent, and dust upon his hair,
Watch'd my lord's coming forth, and push'd
The golden mace-bearers aside,
And fell at the King's feet, and cried. 35

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

'Justice, O King, and on myself'
On this great sinner, who did break
The law, and by the law must die!
Vengeance, O King!'

But the King spake
'What fool is this, that hurts our ears 40
With folly? or what drunken slave?
My guards, what, prick him with your spears!
Prick me the fellow from the path!'
As the King said, so it was done,
And to the mosque my lord pass'd on 45

But on the morrow, when the King
Went forth again, the holy book
Carried before him, as is right,
And through the square his way he took,
My man comes running, fleck'd with blood 50
From yesterday, and falling down
Cries out most earnestly 'O King,
My lord, O King, do right, I pray!

'How canst thou, ere thou hear, discern
If I speak folly? but a king, 55
Whether a thing be great or small,
Like Allah, hears and judges all

'Wherefore hear thou! Thou know'st, how fierce
In these last days the sun hath burn'd,
That the green water in the tanks 60
Is to a putrid puddle turn'd,
And the canal, which from the stream
Of Samarcand is brought this way,
Wastes, and runs thinner every day.

37 1849-69 who hath broke 39 1849-69 spoke 44 1849-
77 so was it done 49 1849-77 through the square his path he took,
62 1849-81 that from the stream

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

'Now I at nightfall had gone forth 65
 Alone, and in a darksome place
 Under some mulberry-trees I found
 A little pool, and in short space,
 With all the water that was there
 I fill'd my pitcher, and stole home 70
 Unseen, and having drink to spare,
 I hid the can behind the door,
 And went up on the roof to sleep

 'But in the night, which was with wind
 And burning dust, again I creep 75
 Down, having fever, for a drink

 'Now meanwhile had my brethren found
 The water-pitcher, where it stood
 Behind the door upon the ground,
 And call'd my mother, and they all, 80
 As they were thirsty, and the night
 Most sultry, drain'd the pitcher there,
 That they sate with it, in my sight,
 Their lips still wet, when I came down

 'Now mark! I, being fever'd, sick 85
 (Most unblest also), at that sight
 Brake forth, and cursed them—dost thou hear?
 One was my mother——Now, do right!

 But my lord mused a space, and said
 'Send him away, Sirs, and make on! 90
 It is some madman!' the King said
 As the King bade, so was it done.

 The morrow, at the self-same hour,
 In the King's path, behold, the man,
 Not kneeling, sternly fix'd! he stood 95
 Right opposite, and thus began,

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

Frowning grim down 'Thou wicked King,
Most deaf where thou shouldst most give ear!
What, must I howl in the next world,
Because thou wilt not listen here'

100

'What, wilt thou pray, and get thee grace,
And all grace shall to me be grudged'
Nay but, I swear, from this thy path
I will not stir till I be judged'

Then they who stood about the King
Drew close together and confer'd,
Till that the King stood forth and said
'Before the priests thou shalt be heard'

105

But when the Ulemas were met,
And the thing heard, they doubted not;
But sentenced him, as the law is,
To die by stoning on the spot

110

Now the King charged us secretly
'Stoned must he be, the law stands so
Yet, if he seek to fly, give way,
Hinder him not, but let him go'

115

So saying, the King took a stone,
And cast it softly,—but the man,
With a great joy upon his face,
Kneel'd down, and cried not, neither ran.

120

So they, whose lot it was, cast stones,
That they flew thick and bruised him sore
But he praised Allah with loud voice,
And remain'd kneeling as before

My lord had cover'd up his face;
But when one told him, 'He is dead,'
Turning him quickly to go in,
'Bring thou to me his corpse,' he said

125

109 1849 Ulema

116 1849, 1855 Forbid him not,

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

And truly, while I speak, O King,
I hear the bearers on the stair, 130
Wilt thou they straightway bring him in?
—Ho! enter ye who tarry there!

The Vizier

O King, in this I praise thee not!
Now must I call thy grief not wise
Is he thy friend, or of thy blood, 135
To find such favour in thine eyes?

Nay, were he thine own mother's son,
Still, thou art king, and the law stands
It were not meet the balance swerved,
The sword were broken in thy hands 140

But being nothing, as he is,
Why for no cause make sad thy face?—
Lo, I am old! three kings, ere thee,
Have I seen reigning in this place

But who, through all this length of time, 145
Could bear the burden of his years,
If he for strangers pain'd his heart
Not less than those who merit tears?

Fathers we *must* have, wife and child,
And grievous is the grief for these, 150
This pain alone, which *must* be borne,
Makes the head white, and bows the knees

But other loads than this his own
One man is not well made to bear
Besides, to each are his own friends, 155
To mourn with him, and show him care,

Look, this is but one single place,
Though it be great, all the earth round,
If a man bear to have it so,
Things which might vex him shall be found 160

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

Upon the Russian frontier, where
 The watchers of two armies stand
 Near one another, many a man,
 Seeking a prey unto his hand,
 Hath snatch'd a little fair-hair'd slave, 165
 They snatch also, towards Merve,
 The Shiah dogs, who pasture sheep,
 And up from thence to Orgunje
 And these all, labouring for a lord,
 Eat not the fruit of their own hands, 170
 Which is the heaviest of all plagues,
 To that man's mind, who understands
 The kaffirs also (whom God curse!)
 Vex one another, night and day,
 There are the lepers, and all sick, 175
 There are the poor, who faint alway
 All these have sorrow, and keep still,
 Whilst other men make cheer, and sing
 Wilt thou have pity on all these?
 No, nor on this dead dog, O King! 180

The King

O Vizier, thou art old, I young!
 Clear in these things I cannot see
 My head is burning, and a heat
 Is in my skin which angers me
 But hear ye this, ye sons of men! 185
 They that bear rule, and are obey'd,
 Unto a rule more strong than theirs
 Are in their turn obedient made
 In vain therefore, with wistful eyes
 Gazing up hither, the poor man, 190
 Who loiters by the high-heap'd booths,
 Below there, in the Registràn,

161 1849 Upon the northern frontier,

168 1849 Urghendjè.

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

Says 'Happy he, who lodges there!
 With silken raiment, store of rice,
 And for this drought, all kinds of fruits, 195
 Grape-syrup, squares of colour'd ice,
 'With cherries serv'd in drifts of snow.'
 In vain hath a king power to build
 Houses, arcades, enamell'd mosques,
 And to make orchard-closes, fill'd 200
 With curious fruit-trees brought from far,
 With cisterns for the winter-rain,
 And, in the desert, spacious inns
 In divers places—if that pain
 Is not more lighten'd, which he feels, 205
 If his will be not satisfied,
 And that it be not, from all time
 The law is planted, to abide
 Thou wast a sinner, thou poor man!
 Thou wast athirst, and didst not see, 210
 That, though we take what we desire,
 We must not snatch it eagerly
 And I have meat and drink at will,
 And rooms of treasures, not a few.
 But I am sick, nor heed I these, 215
 And what I would, I cannot do
 Even the great honour which I have,
 When I am dead, will soon grow still,
 So have I neither joy, nor fame
 But what I can do, that I will 220
 I have a fretted brick-work tomb
 Upon a hill on the right hand,
 Hard by a close of apricots,
 Upon the road of Samarcand,

201 1849, 1855 fruit trees, bought from 209, 210 1849, 1855 Thou wert
 211 1849-69 though we snatch

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

Thither, O Vizier, will I bear 225
This man my pity could not save,
And, plucking up the marble flags,
There lay his body in my grave
Bring water, nard, and linen rolls!
Wash off all blood, set smooth each limb!
Then say 'He was not wholly vile, 230
Because a king shall bury him'

BALDER DEAD'

[First published 1855 Reprinted 1869 and thereafter]

I. SENDING

So on the floor lay Balder dead, and round
Lay thickly strewn swords, axes, darts, and spears,
Which all the Gods in sport had idly thrown
At Balder, whom no weapon pierced or clove,
But in his breast stood flat the fatal bough 5
Of mistletoe, which Lok the Accuser gave
To Hoder, and unwitting Hoder threw—
'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm
And all the Gods and all the Heroes came,
And stood round Balder on the bloody floor, 10
Weeping and wailing, and Valhalla rang
Up to its golden roof with sobs and cries,
And on the tables stood the untasted meats,
And in the horns and gold-rimm'd skulls the wine
And now would night have fall'n and found them yet 15
Wailing, but otherwise was Odin's will
And thus the father of the ages spake —
'Enough of tears, ye Gods, enough of wail!
Not to lament in was Valhalla made

227 1849 And, tearing up

BALDER DEAD Title, 1855 Balder Dead / An Episode.

1 Sending 14 1855-81 skulls

BALDER DEAD

If any here might weep for Balder's death, 20
 I most might weep, his father, such a son
 I lose to-day, so bright, so loved a God
 But he has met that doom, which long ago
 The Normies, when his mother bare him, spun,
 And fate set seal, that so his end must be 25
 Balder has met his death, and ye survive—
 Weep him an hour, but what can grief avail?
 For ye yourselves, ye Gods, shall meet your doom,
 All ye who hear me, and inhabit Heaven,
 And I too, Odin too, the Lord of all 30
 But ours we shall not meet, when that day comes,
 With women's tears and weak complaining cries—
 Why should we meet another's portion so?
 Rather it fits you, having wept your hour,
 With cold dry eyes, and hearts composed and stern, 35
 To live, as erst, your daily life in Heaven
 By me shall vengeance on the murderer Lok,
 The foe, the accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
 Be strictly cared for, in the appointed day
 Meanwhile, to-morrow, when the morning dawns, 40
 Bring wood to the seashore to Balder's ship,
 And on the deck build high a funeral-pile,
 And on the top lay Balder's corpse, and put
 Fire to the wood, and send him out to sea
 To burn, for that is what the dead desire ' 45
 So spake the King of Gods, and straightway rose,
 And mounted his horse Sleipner, whom he rode,
 And from the hall of Heaven he rode away
 To Lidskialf, and sate upon his throne,
 The mount, from whence his eye surveys the world 50
 And far from Heaven he turn'd his shining orbs
 To look on Midgard, and the earth, and men
 And on the conjuring Lapps he bent his gaze
 Whom antler'd reindeer pull over the snow,

28 1855 For you 32 1855, 1869 woman's tears 46 1855, 1869 So
 having spoke, the King of Gods arose

BALDER DEAD

And on the Finns, the gentlest of mankind, 55
 Fair men, who live in holes under the ground,
 Nor did he look once more to Ida's plain,
 Nor tow'rd Valhalla, and the sorrowing Gods,
 For well he knew the Gods would heed his word,
 And cease to mourn, and think of Balder's pyre 60
 But in Valhalla all the Gods went back
 From around Balder, all the Heroes went,
 And left his body stretch'd upon the floor
 And on their golden chairs they sate again,
 Beside the tables, in the hall of Heaven, 65
 And before each the cooks who served them placed
 New messes of the boar Serimner's flesh,
 And the Valkyries crown'd their horns with mead
 So they, with pent-up hearts and tearless eyes,
 Wailing no more, in silence ate and drank, 70
 While twilight fell, and sacred night came on
 But the blind Hoder left the feasting Gods
 In Odin's hall, and went through Asgard streets,
 And past the haven where the Gods have moor'd
 Their ships, and through the gate, beyond the wall, 75
 Though sightless, yet his own mind led the God
 Down to the margin of the roaring sea
 He came, and sadly went along the sand,
 Between the waves and black o'erhanging cliffs
 Where in and out the screaming sea-fowl fly, 80
 Until he came to where a gully breaks
 Through the cliff-wall, and a fresh stream runs down
 From the high moors behind, and meets the sea
 There, in the glen, Fensaler stands, the house
 Of Frea, honour'd mother of the Gods, 85
 And shows its lighted windows to the main
 There he went up, and pass'd the open doors,
 And in the hall he found those women old,
 The prophetesses, who by rite eterne
 On Frea's hearth feed high the sacred fire 90

58 1855 towards

BALDER DEAD

Both night and day, and by the inner wall
 Upon her golden chair the Mother sate,
 With folded hands, revolving things to come
 To her drew Hoder near, and spake, and said —
 'Mother, a child of bale thou bar'st in me! 95
 For, first, thou barest me with blinded eyes,
 Sightless and helpless, wandering weak in Heaven,
 And, after that, of ignorant witless mind
 Thou barest me, and unforeseeing soul,
 That I alone must take the branch from Lok, 100
 The foe, the accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
 And cast it at the dear-loved Balder's breast
 At whom the Gods in sport their weapons threw—
 'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm
 Now therefore what to attempt, or whither fly, 105
 For who will bear my hateful sight in Heaven?
 Can I, O mother, bring them Balder back?
 Or—for thou know'st the fates, and things allow'd—
 Can I with Hela's power a compact strike,
 And make exchange, and give my life for his? 110
 He spoke the mother of the Gods replied —
 'Hoder, ill-fated, child of bale, my son,
 Sightless in soul and eye, what words are these?
 That one, long portion'd with his doom of death,
 Should change his lot, and fill another's life, 115
 And Hela yield to this, and let him go!
 On Balder Death hath laid her hand, not thee,
 Nor doth she count this life a price for that
 For many Gods in Heaven, not thou alone,
 Would freely die to purchase Balder back, 120
 And wend themselves to Hela's gloomy realm
 For not so gladsome is that life in Heaven
 Which Gods and heroes lead, in feast and fray,
 Waiting the darkness of the final times,
 That one should grudge its loss for Balder's sake, 125
 Balder their joy, so bright, so loved a God
 But fate withstands, and laws forbid this way

BALDER DEAD

Yet in my secret mind one way I know,
 Nor do I judge if it shall win or fail,
 But much must still be tried, which shall but fail ' 130
 And the blind Hoder answer'd her, and said —
 'What way is this, O mother, that thou show'st?
 Is it a matter which a God might try?'
 And straight the mother of the Gods replied —
 'There is a road which leads to Hela's realm, 135
 Untrodden, lonely, far from light and Heaven
 Who goes that way must take no other horse
 To ride, but Sleipner, Odin's horse, alone
 Nor must he choose that common path of Gods
 Which every day they come and go in Heaven, 140
 O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
 Past Midgard fortress, down to earth and men
 But he must tread a dark untravell'd road
 Which branches from the north of Heaven, and ride
 Nine days, nine nights, toward the northern ice, 145
 Through valleys deep-engulph'd, with roaring streams
 And he will reach on the tenth morn a bridge
 Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
 Not Bifrost, but that bridge a damsel keeps,
 Who tells the passing troops of dead their way 150
 To the low shore of ghosts, and Hela's realm
 And she will bid him northward steer his course
 Then he will journey through no lighted land,
 Nor see the sun arise, nor see it set,
 But he must ever watch the northern Bear, 155
 Who from her frozen height with jealous eye
 Confronts the Dog and Hunter in the south,
 And is alone not dipt in Ocean's stream
 And straight he will come down to Ocean's strand—
 Ocean, whose watery ring enfolds the world, 160
 And on whose marge the ancient giants dwell
 But he will reach its unknown northern shore,

135 1855-81 There is a way MS alteration (in 1881 volume) a road
 145 1855 towards

BALDER DEAD

Far, far beyond the outmost giant's home,
 At the chink'd fields of ice, the waste of snow
 And he must fare across the dismal ice 165
 Northward, until he meets a stretching wall
 Barring his way, and in the wall a grate
 But then he must dismount, and on the ice
 Tighten the girths of Sleipner, Odin's horse,
 And make him leap the grate, and come within 170
 And he will see stretch round him Hela's realm,
 The plains of Nifheim, where dwell the dead,
 And hear the roaring of the streams of Hell
 And he will see the feeble, shadowy tribes,
 And Balder sitting crown'd, and Hela's throne 175
 Then must he not regard the wailful ghosts
 Who all will flit, like eddying leaves, around,
 But he must straight accost their solemn queen,
 And pay her homage, and entreat with prayers,
 Telling her all that grief they have in Heaven 180
 For Balder, whom she holds by right below,
 If haply he may melt her heart with words,
 And make her yield, and give him Balder back '
 She spoke, but Hoder answer'd her and said —
 'Mother, a dreadful way is this thou show'st, 185
 No journey for a sightless God to go'
 And straight the mother of the Gods replied —
 'Therefore thyself thou shalt not go, my son
 But he whom first thou meetest when thou com'st
 To Asgard, and declar'st this hidden way, 190
 Shall go, and I will be his guide unseen '
 She spoke, and on her face let fall her veil,
 And bow'd her head, and sate with folded hands,
 But at the central hearth those women old,
 Who while the Mother spake had ceased their toil, 195
 Began again to heap the sacred fire
 And Hoder turn'd, and left his mother's house,
 Fensaler, whose lit windows look to sea,
 165 1855 And he will fare 176 1855, 1869 Then he must not

BALDER DEAD

And came again down to the roaring waves,
And back along the beach to Asgard went, 200
Pondering on that which Frea said should be

But night came down, and darken'd Asgard streets
Then from their loathéd feast the Gods arose,
And lighted torches, and took up the corpse
Of Balder from the floor of Odin's hall, 205
And laid it on a bier, and bare him home

Through the fast-darkening streets to his own house,
Breibablik, on whose columns Balder graved
The enchantments that recall the dead to life
For wise he was, and many curious arts, 210
Postures of runes, and healing herbs he knew,

Unhappy! but that art he did not know,
To keep his own life safe, and see the sun
There to his hall the Gods brought Balder home,
And each bespoke him as he laid him down — 215

'Would that ourselves, O Balder, we were borne
Home to our halls, with torchlight, by our kin,
So thou might'st live, and still delight the Gods!'

They spake, and each went home to his own house
But there was one, the first of all the Gods 220
For speed, and Hermod was his name in Heaven,
Most fleet he was, but now he went the last,
Heavy in heart for Balder, to his house,
Which he in Asgard built him, there to dwell,
Against the harbour, by the city-wall 225

Him the blind Hoder met, as he came up
From the sea cityward, and knew his step,
Nor yet could Hermod see his brother's face,
For it grew dark, but Hoder touch'd his arm
And as a spray of honeysuckle flowers 230

Brushes across a tired traveller's face
Who shuffles through the deep dew-moisten'd dust,
On a May evening, in the darken'd lanes,
And starts him, that he thinks a ghost went by—
So Hoder brush'd by Hermod's side, and said — 235

BALDER DEAD

'Take Sleipner, Hermod, and set forth with dawn
 To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back,
 And they shall be thy guides, who have the power'
 He spake, and brush'd soft by, and disappear'd
 And Hermod gazed into the night, and said — 240
 'Who is it utters through the dark his hest
 So quickly, and will wait for no reply?
 The voice was like the unhappy Hoder's voice
 Howbeit I will see, and do his hest,
 For there rang note divine in that command' 245
 So speaking, the fleet-footed Hermod came
 Home, and lay down to sleep in his own house,
 And all the Gods lay down in their own homes
 And Hoder too came home, distraught with grief,
 Loathing to meet, at dawn, the other Gods, 250
 And he went in, and shut the door, and fixt
 His sword upright, and fell on it, and died
 But from the hill of Lidskialf Odin rose,
 The throne, from which his eye surveys the world,
 And mounted Sleipner, and in darkness rode 255
 To Asgard And the stars came out in heaven,
 High over Asgard, to light home the King
 But fiercely Odin gallop'd, moved in heart,
 And swift to Asgard, to the gate, he came
 And terribly the hoofs of Sleipner rang 260
 Along the flinty floor of Asgard streets,
 And the Gods trembled on their golden beds
 Hearing the wrathful Father coming home—
 For dread, for like a whirlwind, Odin came
 And to Valhalla's gate he rode, and left 265
 Sleipner, and Sleipner went to his own stall,
 And in Valhalla Odin laid him down
 But in Breidablik, Nanna, Balder's wife,
 Came with the Goddesses who wrought her will,
 And stood by Balder lying on his bier 270
 And at his head and feet she station'd Scalds

270 1855, stood round Balder

BALDER DEAD

Who in their lives were famous for their song,
 These o'er the corpse intoned a plaintive strain,
 A dirge—and Nanna and her train replied
 And far into the night they wail'd their dirge 275
 But when their souls were satisfied with wail,
 They went, and laid them down, and Nanna went
 Into an upper chamber, and lay down,
 And Frea seal'd her tired lids with sleep

And 'twas when night is bordering hard on dawn, 280
 When air is chilliest, and the stars sunk low,
 Then Balder's spirit through the gloom drew near,
 In garb, in form, in feature as he was,
 Alive, and still the rays were round his head
 Which were his glorious mark in Heaven, he stood 285
 Over against the curtain of the bed,
 And gazed on Nanna as she slept, and spake —

'Poor lamb, thou sleepest, and forgett'st thy woe!
 Tears stand upon the lashes of thine eyes,
 Tears wet the pillow by thy cheek, but thou, 290
 Like a young child, hast cried thyself to sleep.
 Sleep on, I watch thee, and am here to aid
 Alive I kept not far from thee, dear soul!
 Neither do I neglect thee now, though dead
 For with to-morrow's dawn the Gods prepare 295
 To gather wood, and build a funeral-pile
 Upon my ship, and burn my corpse with fire,
 That sad, sole honour of the dead, and thee
 They think to burn, and all my choicest wealth,
 With me, for thus ordains the common rite 300
 But it shall not be so, but mild, but swift,
 But painless shall a stroke from Frea come,
 To cut thy thread of life, and free thy soul,
 And they shall burn thy corpse with mine, not thee.
 And well I know that by no stroke of death, 305
 Tardy or swift, would'st thou be loath to die,
 So it restored thee, Nanna, to my side,
 Whom thou so well hast loved, but I can smooth

BALDER DEAD

Thy way, and this, at least, my prayers avail
 Yes, and I fain would altogether ward 310
 Death from thy head, and with the Gods in Heaven
 Prolong thy life, though not by thee desired—
 But right bars this, not only thy desire
 Yet dreary, Nanna, is the life they lead
 In that dim world, in Hela's mouldering realm, 315
 And doleful are the ghosts, the troops of dead,
 Whom Hela with austere control presides
 For of the race of Gods is no one there,
 Save me alone, and Hela, solemn queen,
 And all the nobler souls of mortal men 320
 On battle-field have met their death, and now
 Feast in Valhalla, in my father's hall,
 Only the inglorious sort are there below,
 The old, the cowards, and the weak are there—
 Men spent by sickness, or obscure decay 325
 But even there, O Nanna, we might find
 Some solace in each other's look and speech,
 Wandering together through that gloomy world,
 And talking of the life we led in Heaven,
 While we yet lived, among the other Gods ' 330
 He spake, and straight his lineaments began
 To fade, and Nanna in her sleep stretch'd out
 Her arms towards him with a cry—but he
 Mournfully shook his head, and disappear'd
 And as the woodman sees a little smoke 335
 Hang in the air, afield, and disappear,
 So Balder faded in the night away
 And Nanna on her bed sank back, but then
 Freia, the mother of the Gods, with stroke
 Painless and swift, set free her airy soul, 340
 Which took, on Balder's track, the way below,
 And instantly the sacred morn appear'd

320 1881 only For all the

338 1855 sunk back

BALDER DEAD

2. JOURNEY TO THE DEAD

FORTH from the east, up the ascent of Heaven,
 Day drove his courser with the shining mane,
 And in Valhalla, from his gable-perch,
 The golden-crested cock began to crow
 Hereafter, in the blackest dead of night, 5
 With shrill and dismal cries that bird shall crow,
 Warning the Gods that foes draw nigh to Heaven,
 But now he crew at dawn, a cheerful note,
 To wake the Gods and Heroes to their tasks
 And all the Gods, and all the Heroes, woke 10
 And from their beds the Heroes rose, and donn'd
 Their arms, and led their horses from the stall,
 And mounted them, and in Valhalla's court
 Were ranged, and then the daily fray began
 And all day long they there are hack'd and hewn, 15
 'Mid dust, and groans, and limbs lopp'd off, and blood,
 But all at night return to Odin's hall,
 Woundless and fresh, such lot is theirs in Heaven
 And the Valkyries on their steeds went forth
 Tow'rd earth and fights of men, and at their side 20
 Skulda, the youngest of the Normies, rode,
 And over Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
 Past Midgard fortress, down to earth they came,
 There through some battle-field, where men fall fast,
 Their horses fetlock-deep in blood, they ride, 25
 And pick the bravest warriors out for death,
 Whom they bring back with them at night to Heaven
 To glad the Gods, and feast in Odin's hall
 But the Gods went not now, as otherwhile,
 Into the tilt-yard, where the Heroes fought, 30
 To feast their eyes with looking on the fray,
 Nor did they to their judgment-place repair
 By the ash Igdrasil, in Ida's plain,
 Where they hold council, and give laws for men
 But they went, Odin first, the rest behind, 35

20 1855-81 Toward Earth

BALDER DEAD

To the hall Gladheim, which is built of gold,
 Where are in circle ranged twelve golden chairs,
 And in the midst one higher, Odin's throne
 There all the Gods in silence sate them down,
 And thus the Father of the ages spake — 40
 'Go quickly, Gods, bring wood to the seashore,
 With all, which it beseems the dead to have,
 And make a funeral-pile on Balder's ship,
 On the twelfth day the Gods shall burn his corpse
 But Hermod, thou take Sleipner, and ride down 45
 To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back '
 So said he, and the Gods arose, and took
 Axes and ropes, and at their head came Thor,
 Shouldering his hammer, which the giants know
 Forth wended they, and drave their steeds before 50
 And up the dewy mountain-tracks they fared
 To the dark forests, in the early dawn,
 And up and down, and side and slant they roam'd
 And from the glens all day an echo came
 Of crashing falls, for with his hammer Thor 55
 Smote 'mid the rocks the lichen-bearded pines,
 And burst their roots, while to their tops the Gods
 Made fast the woven ropes, and haled them down,
 And lopp'd their boughs, and clove them on the sward,
 And bound the logs behind their steeds to draw, 60
 And drave them homeward, and the snorting steeds
 Went straining through the crackling brushwood down,
 And by the darkling forest-paths the Gods
 Follow'd, and on their shoulders carried boughs
 And they came out upon the plain, and pass'd 65
 Asgard, and led their horses to the beach,
 And loosed them of their loads on the seashore,
 And ranged the wood in stacks by Balder's ship,
 And every God went home to his own house
 But when the Gods were to the forest gone, 70
 Hermod led Sleipner from Valhalla forth

50 1855 drove

61 1855 drove

BALDER DEAD

And saddled him, before that, Slepner brook'd
 No meaner hand than Odin's on his mane,
 On his broad back no lesser rider bore,
 Yet docile now he stood at Hermod's side, 75
 Arching his neck, and glad to be bestrode,
 Knowing the God they went to seek, how dear
 But Hermod mounted him, and sadly fared
 In silence up the dark untravell'd road
 Which branches from the north of Heaven, and went 80
 All day, and daylight waned, and night came on
 And all that night he rode, and journey'd so,
 Nine days, nine nights, toward the northern ice,
 Through valleys deep-engulph'd, by roaring streams
 And on the tenth morn he beheld the bridge 85
 Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
 And on the bridge a damsel watching arm'd,
 In the strait passage, at the farther end,
 Where the road issues between walling rocks
 Scant space that warder left for passers by,— 90
 But as when cowherds in October drive
 Their kine across a snowy mountain-pass
 To winter-pasture on the southern side,
 And on the ridge a waggon chokes the way,
 Wedged in the snow, then painfully the hinds 95
 With goad and shouting urge their cattle past,
 Plunging through deep untrodden banks of snow
 To right and left, and warm steam fills the air—
 So on the bridge that damsel block'd the way,
 And question'd Hermod as he came, and said — 100
 'Who art thou on thy black and fiery horse
 Under whose hoofs the bridge o'er Giall's stream
 Rumbles and shakes? Tell me thy race and home
 But yestermorn, five troops of dead pass'd by,
 Bound on their way below to Hela's realm, 105
 Nor shook the bridge so much as thou alone

80 1869 With branches [sic] 83 1855 towards 88 1855-81
 further

BALDER DEAD

And thou hast flesh and colour on thy cheeks,
Like men who live, and draw the vital air,
Nor look'st thou pale and wan, like men deceased,
Souls bound below, my daily passers here ' 110

And the fleet-footed Hermod answer'd her —
'O damsel, Hermod am I call'd, the son
Of Odin, and my high-roof'd house is built
Far hence, in Asgard, in the city of Gods,
And Slepner, Odin's horse, is this I ride 115
And I come, sent this road on Balder's track,
Say then, if he hath cross'd thy bridge or no'

He spake, the warder of the bridge replied —
'O Hermod, rarely do the feet of Gods
Or of the hoises of the Gods resound 120
Upon my bridge, and, when they cross, I know
Balder hath gone this way, and ta'en the road
Below there, to the north, tow'rd Hela's realm
From here the cold white mist can be discern'd,
Nor lit with sun, but through the darksome air 125
By the dim vapour-blotted light of stars,
Which hangs over the ice where lies the road
For in that ice are lost those northern streams,
Freezing and ridging in their onward flow,
Which from the fountain of Vergelmer run, 130
The spring that bubbles up by Hela's throne
There are the joyless seats, the haunt of ghosts,
Hela's pale swarms, and there was Balder bound
Ride on! pass free! but he by this is there ' 135

She spake, and stepp'd aside, and left him room 135
And Hermod greeted her, and gallop'd by
Across the bridge, then she took post again
But northward Hermod rode, the way below,
And o'er a darksome tract, which knows no sun,
But by the blotted light of stars, he fared 140
And he came down to Ocean's northern strand,
At the drear ice, beyond the giants' home

123 1855-81 toward Hela's 125 1855-77 Not lit

BALDER DEAD

Thence on he journey'd o'er the fields of ice
 Still north, until he met a stretching wall
 Barring his way, and in the wall a grate 145
 Then he dismounted, and diew tight the girths,
 On the smooth ice, of Slepner, Odin's horse,
 And made him leap the grate, and came within
 And he beheld spread round him Hela's realm,
 The plains of Nifheim, where dwell the dead, 150
 And heard the thunder of the streams of Hell
 For near the wall the river of Roaring flows,
 Outmost, the others near the centre run—
 The Storm, the Abyss, the Howling, and the Pain,
 These flow by Hela's throne, and near their spring 155
 And from the dark flock'd up the shadowy tribes,—
 And as the swallows crowd the bulrush-beds
 Of some clear river, issuing from a lake,
 On autumn-days, before they cross the sea,
 And to each bulrush-crest a swallow hangs 160
 Quivering, and others skim the river-streams,
 And their quick twittering fills the banks and shores—
 So around Hermod swarm'd the twittering ghosts
 Women, and infants, and young men who died
 Too soon for fame, with white ungraven shields, 165
 And old men, known to glory, but their star
 Betray'd them, and of wasting age they died,
 Not wounds, yet, dying, they their armour wore,
 And now have chief regard in Hela's realm
 Behind flock'd wrangling up a piteous crew, 170
 Greeted of none, disfeatured and forlorn—
 Cowards, who were in sloughs interr'd alive,
 And round them still the wattled hurdles hung,
 Wherewith they stamp'd them down, and trod them deep,
 To hide their shameful memory from men 175
 But all he pass'd unhail'd, and reach'd the throne
 Of Hela, and saw, near it, Balder crown'd,

160-1 1855-81 a swallow hangs

Swinging,

BALDER DEAD

And Hela set thereon, with countenance stern,
 And thus bespake him first the solemn queen —
 'Unhappy, how hast thou endured to leave 180
 The light, and journey to the cheerless land
 Where idly flit about the feeble shades?
 How didst thou cross the bridge o'er Giall's stream,
 Being alive, and come to Ocean's shore?
 Or how o'erleap the grate that bars the wall?' 185
 She spake but down off Sleipner Hermod sprang,
 And fell before her feet, and clasp'd her knees,
 And spake, and mild entreated her, and said —
 'O Hela, wherefore should the Gods declare
 Their errands to each other, or the ways 190
 They go? the errand and the way is known
 Thou know'st, thou know'st, what grief we have in Heaven
 For Balder, whom thou hold'st by right below
 Restore him! for what part fulfils he here?
 Shall he shed cheer over the cheerless seats, 195
 And touch the apathetic ghosts with joy?
 Not for such end, O queen, thou hold'st thy realm
 For Heaven was Balder born, the city of Gods
 And Heroes, where they live in light and joy
 Thither restore him, for his place is there!' 200
 He spoke, and grave replied the solemn queen —
 'Hermod, for he thou art, thou son of Heaven!
 A strange unlikely errand, sure, is thine
 Do the Gods send to me to make them blest?
 Small bliss my race hath of the Gods obtained. 205
 Three mighty children to my father Lok
 Did Angerbode, the giantess, bring forth—
 Fenris the wolf, the Serpent huge, and me
 Of these the Serpent in the sea ye cast,
 Who since in your despite hath wax'd amain, 210
 And now with gleaming ring enfolds the world,
 Me on this cheerless nether world ye threw,
 And gave me nine unlighted realms to rule,

178 1881 (*only*) Hela sat

BALDER DEAD

While on his island in the lake afar,
 Made fast to the boied crag, by wile not strength 215
 Subdued, with limber chains lives Fenris bound
 Lok still subsists in Heaven, our father wise,
 Your mate, though loathed, and feasts in Odin's hall,
 But him too foes await, and netted snares,
 And in a cave a bed of needle-rocks, 220
 And o'er his visage serpents dropping gall
 Yet he shall one day rise, and burst his bonds,
 And with himself set us his offspring free,
 When he guides Muspel's children to their bourne
 Till then in peril or in pain we live, 225
 Wrought by the Gods—and ask the Gods our aid²
 Howbeit, we abide our day, till then,
 We do not as some feebler haters do—
 Seek to afflict our foes with petty pangs,
 Helpless to better us, or ruin them 230
 Come then! if Balder was so dear beloved,
 And this is true, and such a loss is Heaven's—
 Hear, how to Heaven may Balder be restored
 Show me through all the world the signs of grief¹
 Fails but one thing to grieve, here Balder stops! 235
 Let all that lives and moves upon the earth
 Weep him, and all that is without life weep,
 Let Gods, men, brutes, bewEEP him, plants and stones!
 So shall I know the lost was dear indeed,
 And bend my heart, and give him back to Heaven ' 240
 She spake, and Hermod answer'd her, and said —
 'Hela, such as thou say'st, the terms shall be
 But come, declare me this, and truly tell
 May I, ere I depart, bid Balder hail,
 Or is it here withheld to greet the dead?' 245
 He spake, and straightway Hela answered him —
 'Hermod, greet Balder if thou wilt, and hold
 Converse, his speech remains, though he be dead '
 And straight to Balder Hermod turn'd, and spake —

234 1855, 1869 though all [sic]

BALDER DEAD

'Even in the abode of death, O Balder, hail! 250
 Thou hear'st, if hearing, like as speech, is thine,
 The terms of thy releasement hence to Heaven,
 Fear nothing but that all shall be fulfill'd
 For not unmindful of thee are the Gods,
 Who see the light, and blest in Asgard dwell, 255
 Even here they seek thee out, in Hela's realm
 And sure of all the happiest far art thou
 Who ever have been known in earth or Heaven,
 Alive, thou wast of Gods the most beloved,
 And now thou sittest crown'd by Hela's side, 260
 Here, and hast honour among all the dead '
 He spake, and Balder utter'd him reply,
 But feebly, as a voice far off, he said —
 'Hermod the nimble, gild me not my death!
 Better to live a serf, a captured man, 265
 Who scatters rushes in a master's hall,
 Than be a crown'd king here, and rule the dead
 And now I count not of these terms as safe
 To be fulfill'd, nor my return as sure,
 Though I be loved, and many mourn my death, 270
 For double-minded ever was the seed
 Of Lok, and double are the gifts they give
 Howbeit, report thy message, and therewith,
 To Odin, to my father, take this ring,
 Memorial of me, whether saved or no, 275
 And tell the Heaven-born Gods how thou hast seen
 Me sitting here below by Hela's side,
 Crown'd, having honour among all the dead '
 He spake, and raised his hand, and gave the ring
 And with inscrutable regard the queen 280
 Of Hell beheld them, and the ghosts stood dumb
 But Hermod took the ring, and yet once more
 Kneel'd and did homage to the solemn queen,
 Then mounted Sleipner, and set forth to ride
 Back, through the astonish'd tribes of dead, to Heaven. 285
 259 1855, 1869 thou wert 265 1855 to live a slave,

BALDER DEAD

And to the wall he came, and found the grate
 Lifted, and issued on the fields of ice
 And o'er the ice he fared to Ocean's strand,
 And up from thence, a wet and misty road,
 To the arm'd damsel's bridge, and Giall's stream 290
 Worse was that way to go than to return,
 For him,—for others all return is barr'd
 Nine days he took to go, two to return,
 And on the twelfth morn saw the light of Heaven
 And as a traveller in the early dawn 295
 To the steep edge of some great valley comes,
 Through which a river flows, and sees, beneath,
 Clouds of white rolling vapours fill the vale,
 But o'er them, on the farther slope, descries
 Vineyards, and crofts, and pastures, bright with sun— 300
 So Hermod, o'er the fog between, saw Heaven
 And Sleipner snorted, for he smelt the air
 Of Heaven, and mightily, as wing'd, he flew
 And Hermod saw the towers of Asgard rise,
 And he drew near, and heard no living voice 305
 In Asgard, and the golden halls were dumb
 Then Hermod knew what labour held the Gods,
 And through the empty streets he rode, and pass'd
 Under the gate-house to the sands, and found
 The Gods on the sea-shore by Balder's ship 310

3 FUNERAL

THE Gods held talk together, group'd in knots,
 Round Balder's corpse, which they had thither borne,
 And Hermod came down tow'rd's them from the gate
 And Lok, the father of the serpent, first
 Beheld him come, and to his neighbour spake — 5
 'See, here is Hermod, who comes single back
 From Hell, and shall I tell thee how he seems?
 Like as a farmer, who hath lost his dog,

306 1855 but the golden halls

3 Funeral 3 1855-81 down towards

BALDER DEAD

Some morn, at market, in a crowded town—
 Through many streets the poor beast runs in vain, 10
 And follows this man after that, for hours,
 And, late at evening, spent and panting, falls
 Before a stranger's threshold, not his home,
 With flanks a-tremble, and his slender tongue
 Hangs quivering out between his dust-smear'd jaws, 15
 And piteously he eyes the passers by,
 But home his master comes to his own farm,
 Far in the country, wondering where he is—
 So Hermod comes to-day unfollow'd home'

And straight his neighbour, moved with wrath, replied —
 'Deceiver! fair in form, but false in heart! 21
 Enemy, mocker, whom, though Gods, we hate—
 Peace, lest our father Odin hear thee gibe!
 Would I might see him snatch thee in his hand,
 And bind thy carcase, like a bale, with cords, 25
 And hurl thee in a lake, to sink or swim!
 If clear from plotting Balder's death, to swim,
 But deep, if thou devisedst it, to drown,
 And perish, against fate, before thy day'

So they two soft to one another spake 30
 But Odin look'd toward the land, and saw
 His messenger, and he stood forth, and cried
 And Hermod came, and leapt from Sleipner down,
 And in his father's hand put Sleipner's rein,
 And greeted Odin and the Gods, and said — 35
 'Odin, my father, and ye, Gods of Heaven!
 Lo, home, having perform'd your will, I come
 Into the joyless kingdom have I been,
 Below, and look'd upon the shadowy tribes
 Of ghosts, and communed with their solemn queen, 40
 And to your prayer she sends you this reply
Show her through all the world the signs of grief!
Fails but one thing to grieve, there Balder stops!
Let Gods, men, brutes, beweeep him, plants and stones

9 1855 One morn,

BALDER DEAD

So shall she know your loss was dear indeed, 45
And bend her heart, and give you Balder back'
 He spoke, and all the Gods to Odin look'd,
 And straight the Father of the ages said —
 'Ye Gods, these terms may keep another day
 But now, put on your arms, and mount your steeds, 50
 And in procession all come near, and weep
 Balder, for that is what the dead desire
 When ye enough have wept, then build a pile
 Of the heap'd wood, and burn his corpse with fire
 Out of our sight, that we may turn from grief, 55
 And lead, as erst, our daily life in Heaven'
 He spoke, and the Gods arm'd, and Odin donn'd
 His dazzling corslet and his helm of gold,
 And led the way on Sleipner, and the rest
 Follow'd, in tears, their father and their king 60
 And thrice in arms around the dead they rode,
 Weeping, the sands were wetted, and their arms,
 With their thick-falling tears—so good a friend
 They mourn'd that day, so bright, so loved a God
 And Odin came, and laid his kingly hands 65
 On Balder's breast, and thus began the wail —
 'Farewell, O Balder, bright and loved, my son!
 In that great day, the twilight of the Gods,
 When Muspel's children shall beleaguer Heaven,
 Then we shall miss thy counsel and thy arm' 70
 Thou camest near the next, O warrior Thor!
 Shouldering thy hammer, in thy chariot drawn,
 Swaying the long-hair'd goats with silver'd rein,
 And over Balder's corpse these words didst say —
 'Brother, thou dwellest in the darksome land, 75
 And talkest with the feeble tribes of ghosts,
 Now, and I know not how they prize thee there—
 But here, I know, thou wilt be miss'd and mourn'd
 For haughty spirits and high wraths are rife
 Among the Gods and Heroes here in Heaven, 80
 As among those whose joy and work is war,

BALDER DEAD

And daily strifes arise, and angry words
 But from thy lips, O Balder, night or day,
 Heard no one ever an injurious word
 To God or Hero, but thou keptest back 85
 The others, labouring to compose their brawls
 Be ye then kind, as Balder too was kind!
 For we lose him, who smoothed all strife in Heaven '

He spake, and all the Gods assenting wail'd
 And Freya next came nigh, with golden tears, 90
 The loveliest Goddess she in Heaven, by all
 Most honour'd after Freya, Odin's wife
 Her long ago the wandering Oder took
 To mate, but left her to roam distant lands,
 Since then she seeks him, and weeps tears of gold. 95
 Names hath she many, Vanadis on earth
 They call her, Freya is her name in Heaven,
 She in her hands took Balder's head, and spake —

'Balder, my brother, thou art gone a road
 Unknown and long, and haply on that way 100
 My long-lost wandering Oder thou hast met,
 For in the paths of Heaven he is not found
 Oh, if it be so, tell him what thou wast
 To his neglected wife, and what he is,
 And wring his heart with shame, to hear thy word! 105
 For he, my husband, left me here to pine,
 Not long a wife, when his unquiet heart
 First drove him from me into distant lands,
 Since then I vainly seek him through the world,
 And weep from shore to shore my golden tears, 110
 But neither god nor mortal heeds my pain
 Thou only, Balder, wast for ever kind,
 To take my hand, and wipe my tears, and say.
Weep not, O Freya, weep no goldente ars!
One day the wandering Oder will return, 115
Or thou wilt find him in thy faithful search
On some great road, or resting in an inn,

103, 112 1855, 1869 wert

BALDER DEAD

Or at a ford, or sleeping by a tree

So Balder said,—but Oder, well I know,
My truant Oder I shall see no more 120
To the world's end, and Balder now is gone,
And I am left uncomforted in Heaven'

She spake, and all the Goddesses bewail'd
Last from among the Heroes one came near,
No God, but of the hero-troop the chief— 125
Regner, who swept the northern sea with fleets,
And ruled o'er Denmark and the heathy isles,
Living, but Ella captured him and slew,—
A king whose fame then fill'd the vast of Heaven,
Now time obscures it, and men's later deeds 130
He last approach'd the corpse, and spake, and said —

'Balder, there yet are many Scalds in Heaven
Still left, and that chief Scald, thy brother Brage,
Whom we may bid to sing, though thou art gone
And all these gladly, while we drink, we hear, 135
After the feast is done, in Odin's hall,
But they harp ever on one string, and wake
Remembrance in our soul of wars alone,
Such as on earth we valiantly have waged,
And blood, and ringing blows, and violent death 140
But when thou sangest, Balder, thou didst strike
Another note, and, like a bird in spring,
Thy voice of joyance minded us, and youth,
And wife, and children, and our ancient home
Yes, and I, too, remember'd then no more 145
My dungeon, where the serpents stung me dead,
Nor Ella's victory on the English coast—
But I heard Thora laugh in Gothland Isle,
And saw my shepherdess, Aslauga, tend
Her flock along the white Norwegian beach. 150
Tears started to mine eyes with yearning joy
Therefore with grateful heart I mourn thee dead'

So Regner spake, and all the Heroes groan'd

118 1885 *On at a ford [sic]*

BALDER DEAD

But now the sun had pass'd the height of Heaven,
 And soon had all that day been spent in wail,
 But then the Father of the ages said — 155
 'Ye Gods, there well may be too much of wail!
 Bring now the gather'd wood to Balder's ship,
 Heap on the deck the logs, and build the pyre'
 But when the Gods and Heroes heard, they brought 160
 The wood to Balder's ship, and built a pile,
 Full the deck's breadth, and lofty, then the corpse
 Of Balder on the highest top they laid,
 With Nanna on his right, and on his left
 Hoder, his brother, whom his own hand slew 165
 And they set jars of wine and oil to lean
 Against the bodies, and stuck torches near,
 Splinters of pine-wood, soak'd with turpentine,
 And brought his arms and gold, and all his stuff,
 And slew the dogs who at his table fed, 170
 And his horse, Balder's horse, whom most he loved,
 And placed them on the pyre, and Odin threw
 A last choice gift thereon, his golden ring
 The mast they fixt, and hoisted up the sails,
 Then they put fire to the wood, and Thor 175
 Set his stout shoulder hard against the stern
 To push the ship through the thick sand,—sparks flew
 From the deep trench she plough'd, so strong a God
 Furrow'd it, and the water gurgled in
 And the ship floated on the waves, and rock'd 180
 But in the hills a strong east-wind arose,
 And came down moaning to the sea, first squalls
 Ran black o'er the sea's face, then steady rush'd
 The breeze, and fill'd the sails, and blew the fire
 And wreathed in smoke the ship stood out to sea. 185
 Soon with a roaring rose the mighty fire,
 And the pile crackled, and between the logs

170 1855 the dogs which 172 1855-81 And threw them on the
 pyre, MS alteration, 1881 put [cancelled] on the pyre, placed them
 174 1855 They fixt the mast,

BALDER DEAD

Sharp quivering tongues of flame shot out, and leapt,
 Curling and darting, higher, until they lick'd
 The summit of the pile, the dead, the mast, 190
 And ate the shrivelling sails, but still the ship
 Drove on, ablaze above her hull with fire
 And the Gods stood upon the beach, and gazed
 And while they gazed, the sun went lurid down
 Into the smoke-wrapt sea, and night came on 195
 Then the wind fell, with night, and there was calm,
 But through the dark they watch'd the burning ship
 Still carried o'er the distant waters on,
 Farther and farther, like an eye of fire
 And long, in the far dark, blazed Balder's pile, 200
 But fainter, as the stars rose high, it flared,
 The bodies were consumed, ash choked the pile
 And as, in a decaying winter-fire,
 A charr'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks—
 So with a shower of sparks the pile fell in, 205
 Reddening the sea around, and all was dark
 But the Gods went by starlight up the shore
 To Asgard, and sate down in Odin's hall
 At table, and the funeral-feast began
 All night they ate the boar Serimner's flesh, 210
 And from their horns, with silver rimm'd, drank mead,
 Silent, and waited for the sacred morn
 And morning over all the world was spread
 Then from their loathéd feast the Gods arose,
 And took their horses, and set forth to ride 215
 O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,

Between 199 and 200 1855 has the following lines

And as in the dark night a travelling man
 Who bivouacs in a forest 'mid the hills,
 Sees suddenly a spire of flame shoot up
 Out of the black waste forest, far below,
 Which woodcutters have lighted near their lodge
 Against the wolves, and all night long it flares —

200 1855 So flar'd, in the far darkness, Balder's pyre 1869 So showed

201 1855 as the stars rose high, it burn'd

BALDER DEAD

To the ash Igdrasil, and Ida's plain,
 Thor came on foot, the rest on horseback rode
 And they found Mimir sitting by his fount
 Of wisdom, which beneath the ashtree springs, 220
 And saw the Nornies watering the roots
 Of that world-shadowing tree with honey-dew
 There came the Gods, and sate them down on stones,
 And thus the Father of the ages said —
 'Ye Gods, the terms ye know, which Hermod brought
 Accept them or reject them! both have grounds 226
 Accept them, and they bind us, unfulfill'd,
 To leave for ever Balder in the grave,
 An unrecover'd prisoner, shade with shades
 But how, ye say, should the fulfilment fail?— 230
 Smooth sound the terms, and light to be fulfill'd,
 For dear-beloved was Balder while he lived
 In Heaven and earth, and who would grudge him tears?
 But from the traitorous seed of Lok they come,
 These terms, and I suspect some hidden fraud 235
 Bethink ye, Gods, is there no other way?—
 Speak, were not thus a way, the way for Gods?
 If I, if Odin, clad in radiant arms,
 Mounted on Sleipner, with the warrior Thor
 Drawn in his car beside me, and my sons, 240
 All the strong brood of Heaven, to swell my train,
 Should make irruption into Hela's realm,
 And set the fields of gloom ablaze with light,
 And bring in triumph Balder back to Heaven?
 He spake, and his fierce sons applauded loud 245
 But Freia, mother of the Gods, arose,
 Daughter and wife of Odin, thus she said —
 'Odin, thou whirlwind, what a threat is this!
 Thou threatenest what transcends thy might, even thine
 For of all powers the mightiest far art thou, 250
 Lord over men on earth, and Gods in Heaven,
 Yet even from thee thyself hath been withheld
 One thing—to undo what thou thyself hast ruled

BALDER DEAD

For all which hath been fixt, was fixt by thee
 In the beginning, ere the Gods were born, 255
 Before the Heavens were builded, thou didst slay
 The giant Ymir, whom the abyss brought forth,
 Thou and thy brethren fierce, the sons of Bor,
 And cast his trunk to choke the abysmal void
 But of his flesh and members thou didst build 260
 The earth and Ocean, and above them Heaven
 And from the flaming world, where Muspel reigns,
 Thou sent'st and fetched'st fire, and madest lights,
 Sun, moon, and stars, which thou hast hung in Heaven,
 Dividing clear the paths of night and day 265
 And Asgard thou didst build, and Midgard fort,
 Then me thou mad'st, of us the Gods were born
 Last, walking by the sea, thou foundest spars
 Of wood, and framed'st men, who till the earth,
 Or on the sea, the field of pirates, sail 270
 And all the race of Ymir thou didst drown,
 Save one, Bergelmer,—he on shipboard fled
 Thy deluge, and from him the giants sprang
 But all that brood thou hast removed far off,
 And set by Ocean's utmost marge to dwell, 275
 But Hela into Niflheim thou threw'st,
 And gav'st her nine unlighted worlds to rule,
 A queen, and empire over all the dead
 That empire wilt thou now invade, light up
 Her darkness, from her grasp a subject tear?— 280
 Try it, but I, for one, will not applaud
 Nor do I merit, Odin, thou should'st slight
 Me and my words, though thou be first in Heaven,
 For I too am a Goddess, born of thee,
 Thine eldest, and of me the Gods are sprung, 285
 And all that is to come I know, but lock
 In mine own breast, and have to none reveal'd
 Come then! since Hela holds by right her prey,

259 1855, 1869 And threw his trunk 268 1855, 1869 Then, walking
 287 1855, 1869 In my

BALDER DEAD

But offers terms for his release to Heaven,
 Accept the chance, thou canst no more obtain 290
 Send through the world thy messengers, entreat
 All living and unliving things to weep
 For Balder, if thou haply thus may'st melt
 Hela, and win the loved one back to Heaven '

She spake, and on her face let fall her veil, 295
 And bow'd her head, and sate with folded hands
 Nor did the all-ruling Odin slight her word,
 Straightway he spake, and thus address'd the Gods
 'Go quickly forth through all the world, and pray
 All living and unliving things to weep 300
 Balder, if haply he may thus be won '

When the Gods heard, they straight arose, and took
 Their horses, and rode forth through all the world,
 North, south, east, west, they struck, and roam'd the world,
 Entreating all things to weep Balder's death 305
 And all that lived, and all without life, wept
 And as in winter, when the frost breaks up,
 At winter's end, before the spring begins,
 And a warm west-wind blows, and thaw sets in—
 After an hour a dripping sound is heard 310
 In all the forests, and the soft-strewn snow
 Under the trees is dibbled thick with holes,
 And from the boughs the snowloads shuffle down,
 And, in fields sloping to the south, dark plots
 Of grass peep out amid surrounding snow, 315
 And widen, and the peasant's heart is glad—
 So through the world was heard a dripping noise
 Of all things weeping to bring Balder back,
 And there fell joy upon the Gods to hear

But Hermod rode with Niord, whom he took 320
 To show him spits and beaches of the sea
 Far off, where some unwarn'd might fail to weep—
 Niord, the God of storms, whom fishers know,
 Not born in Heaven, he was in Vanheim rear'd,

289 1881 offer terms

BALDER DEAD

With men, but lives a hostage with the Gods, 325
 He knows each frith, and every rocky creek
 Fringed with dark pines, and sands where seafowl scream—
 They two scour'd every coast, and all things wept
 And they rode home together, through the wood
 Of Jarnvid, which to east of Midgard lies 330
 Bordering the giants, where the trees are none,
 There in the wood before a cave they came,
 Where sate, in the cave's mouth, a skinny hag,
 Toothless and old, she gibes the passers by
 Thok is she call'd, but now Lok wore her shape, 335
 She greeted them the first, and laugh'd, and said —
 'Ye Gods, good lack, is it so dull in Heaven,
 That ye come pleasuring to Thok's iron wood?
 Lovers of change ye are, fastidious sprites
 Look, as in some boor's yard a sweet-breath'd cow, 340
 Whose manger is stuff'd full of good fresh hay,
 Snuffs at it daintily, and stoops her head
 To chew the straw, her litter, at her feet—
 So ye grow squeamish, Gods, and sniff at Heaven!
 She spake, but Hermod answer'd her and said — 345
 'Thok, not for gibes we come, we come for tears
 Balder is dead, and Hela holds her prey,
 But will restore, if all things give him tears
 Begrudge not thine! to all was Balder dear'
 Then, with a louder laugh, the hag replied — 350
 'Is Balder dead? and do ye come for tears?
 Thok with dry eyes will weep o'er Balder's pyre
 Weep him all other things, if weep they will—
 I weep him not! let Hela keep her prey'
 She spake, and to the cavern's depth she fled, 355
 Mocking, and Hermod knew their toil was vain
 And as seafaring men, who long have wrought
 In the great deep for gain, at last come home,
 And towards evening see the headlands rise
 Of their dear country, and can plain descry 360
 350 1855, 1869 But, with a 360 1855 own country, and can clear descry

BALDER DEAD

A fire of wither'd furze which boys have lit
 Upon the cliffs, or smoke of burning weeds
 Out of a till'd field inland,—then the wind
 Catches them, and drives out again to sea,
 And they go long days tossing up and down 365
 Over the grey sea-ridges, and the glimpse
 Of port they had makes bitterer far their toil—
 So the Gods' cross was bitterer for their joy
 Then, sad at heart, to Niord Hermod spake —
 'It is the accuser Lok, who flouts us all! 370
 Ride back, and tell in Heaven this heavy news,
 I must again below, to Hela's realm '
 He spoke, and Niord set forth back to Heaven
 But northward Hermod rode, the way below,
 The way he knew, and traversed Giall's stream, 375
 And down to Ocean groped, and cross'd the ice,
 And came beneath the wall and found the grate
 Still lifted, well was his return foreknown
 And once more Hermod saw around him spread
 The joyless plains, and heard the streams of Hell 380
 But as he enter'd, on the extremest bound
 Of Niflheim, he saw one ghost come near,
 Hovering, and stopping oft, as if afraid—
 Hoder, the unhappy, whom his own hand slew
 And Hermod look'd, and knew his brother's ghost, 385
 And call'd him by his name, and sternly said —
 'Hoder, ill-fated, blind in heart and eyes!
 Why tarriest thou to plunge thee in the gulph
 Of the deep inner gloom, but fittest here,
 In twilight, on the lonely verge of Hell, 390
 Far from the other ghosts, and Hela's throne?
 Doubtless thou fearest to meet Balder's voice,
 Thy brother, whom through folly thou didst slay '
 He spoke, but Hoder answer'd him, and said —
 'Hermod the nimble, dost thou still pursue 395
 The unhappy with reproach, even in the grave?
 For thus I died, and fled beneath the gloom,

BALDER DEAD

Not daily to endure abhorring Gods,
 Nor with a hateful presence cumber Heaven,
 And canst thou not, even here, pass pitying by? 400
 No less than Balder have I lost the light
 Of Heaven, and communion with my kin,
 I too had once a wife, and once a child,
 And substance, and a golden house in Heaven—
 But all I left of my own act, and fled 405
 Below, and dost thou hate me even here?
 Balder upbraids me not, nor hates at all,
 Though he has cause, have any cause, but he,
 When that with downcast looks I hither came,
 Stretch'd forth his hand, and with benignant voice, 410
Welcome, he said, if there be welcome here,
Brother and fellow-sport of Lok with me!
 And not to offend thee, Hermod, nor to force
 My hated converse on thee, came I up
 From the deep gloom, where I will now return, 415
 But earnestly I long'd to hover near,
 Not too far off, when that thou camest by,
 To feel the presence of a brother God,
 And hear the passage of a horse of Heaven,
 For the last time—for here thou com'st no more.' 420
 He spake, and turn'd to go to the inner gloom
 But Hermod stay'd him with mild words, and said —
 'Thou doest well to chide me, Hoder blind!
 Truly thou say'st, the planning guilty mind
 Was Lok's, the unwitting hand alone was thine 425
 But Gods are like the sons of men in this—
 When they have woe, they blame the nearest cause
 Howbeit stay, and be appeased! and tell
 Sits Balder still in pomp by Hela's side,
 Or is he mingled with the unnumber'd dead?' 430
 And the blind Hoder answer'd him and spake —
 'His place of state remains by Hela's side,
 But empty, for his wife, for Nanna came
 Lately below, and join'd him, and the pair

BALDER DEAD

Frequent the still recesses of the realm 435
 Of Hela, and hold converse undisturb'd
 But they too, doubtless, will have breathed the balm,
 Which floats before a visitant from Heaven,
 And have drawn upward to this verge of Hell '
 He spake, and, as he ceased, a puff of wind 440
 Roll'd heavily the leaden mist aside
 Round where they stood, and they beheld two forms
 Make toward them o'er the stretching cloudy plain
 And Hermod straight perceived them, who they were,
 Balder and Nanna, and to Balder said — 445
 'Balder, too truly thou foresaw'st a snare!
 Lok triumphs still, and Hela keeps her prey
 No more to Asgard shalt thou come, nor lodge
 In thy own house, Breidablik, nor enjoy
 The love all bear toward thee, nor train up 450
 Forset, thy son, to be beloved like thee
 Here must thou lie, and wait an endless age
 Therefore for the last time, O Balder, hail!
 He spake, and Balder answer'd him, and said —
 'Hail and farewell! for here thou com'st no more 455
 Yet mourn not for me, Hermod, when thou sitt'st
 In Heaven, nor let the other Gods lament,
 As wholly to be pited, quite forlorn
 For Nanna hath rejoin'd me, who, of old,
 In Heaven, was seldom parted from my side, 460
 And still the acceptance follows me, which crown'd
 My former life, and cheers me even here
 The iron frown of Hela is relax'd
 When I draw nigh, and the wan tribes of dead
 Love me, and gladly bring for my award 465
 Their ineffectual feuds and feeble hates—
 Shadows of hates, but they distress them still '
 And the fleet-footed Hermod made reply —
 'Thou hast then all the solace death allows,

439 1855 upwards
 450 1855 towards

443 1855, 1869 towards
 465 1855 Trust me,

BALDER DEAD

Esteem and function, and so far is well 470
 Yet here thou liest, Balder, underground,
 Rusting for ever, and the years roll on,
 The generations pass, the ages grow,
 And bring us nearer to the final day
 When from the south shall march the fiery band 475
 And cross the bridge of Heaven, with Lok for guide,
 And Fenris at his heel with broken chain,
 While from the east the giant Rymer steers
 His ship, and the great serpent makes to land,
 And all are marshall'd in one flaming square 480
 Against the Gods, upon the plains of Heaven,
 I mourn thee, that thou canst not help us then '
 He spake, but Balder answer'd him, and said —
 'Mourn not for me! Mourn, Hermod, for the Gods,
 Mourn for the men on earth, the Gods in Heaven, 485
 Who live, and with their eyes shall see that day!
 The day will come, when fall shall Asgard's towers,
 And Odin, and his sons, the seed of Heaven,
 But what were I, to save them in that hour?
 If strength might save them, could not Odin save, 490
 My father, and his pride, the warrior Thor,
 Vidar the silent, the impetuous Tyr?
 I, what were I, when these can nought avail?
 Yet, doubtless, when the day of battle comes,
 And the two hosts are marshall'd, and in Heaven 495
 The golden-crested cock shall sound alarm,
 And his black brother-bird from hence reply,
 And bucklers clash, and spears begin to pour—
 Longing will stir within my breast, though vain.
 But not to me so grievous, as, I know, 500
 To other Gods it were, is my enforced
 Absence from fields where I could nothing aid,
 For I am long since weary of your storm
 Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life

487 1855, 1869 when Asgard's towers shall fall, 490 1855 could save
 them, could not

BALDER DEAD

Something too much of war and broils, which make 505
 Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood
 Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail,
 Mine ears are stunn'd with blows, and sick for calm
 Inactive therefore let me lie, in gloom,
 Unarm'd, inglorious, I attend the course 510
 Of ages, and my late return to light,
 In times less alien to a spirit mild,
 In new-recover'd seats, the happier day '

He spake, and the fleet Hermod thus replied —
 'Brother, what seats are these, what happier day?' 515
 Tell me, that I may ponder it when gone '

And the ray-crowned Balder answer'd him —
 'Far to the south, beyond the blue, there spreads
 Another Heaven, the boundless—no one yet
 Hath reach'd it, there hereafter shall arise 520
 The second Asgard, with another name
 Thither, when o'er this present earth and Heavens
 The tempest of the latter days hath swept,
 And they from sight have disappear'd, and sunk,
 Shall a small remnant of the Gods repair, 525
 Hoder and I shall join them from the grave
 There re-assembling we shall see emerge
 From the bright Ocean at our feet an earth
 More fresh, more verdant than the last, with fruits
 Self-springing, and a seed of man preserved, 530
 Who then shall live in peace, as now in war
 But we in Heaven shall find again with joy
 The ruin'd palaces of Odin, seats
 Familiar, halls where we have supp'd of old,
 Re-enter them with wonder, never fill 535
 Our eyes with gazing, and rebuild with tears
 And we shall tread once more the well-known plain
 Of Ida, and among the grass shall find
 The golden dice wherewith we play'd of yore,
 And that will bring to mind the former life 540

539 2855-69 with which we play'd

BALDER DEAD

And pastime of the Gods, the wise discourse
Of Odin, the delights of other days
O Hermod, pray that thou may'st join us then!
Such for the future is my hope, meanwhile,
I rest the thrall of Hela, and endure 545
Death, and the gloom which round me even now
Thickens, and to its inner gulph recalls
Farewell, for longer speech is not allow'd!

He spoke, and waved farewell, and gave his hand
To Nanna, and she gave their brother blind 550
Her hand, in turn, for guidance, and the three
Departed o'er the cloudy plain, and soon
Faded from sight into the interior gloom
But Hermod stood beside his drooping horse,
Mute, gazing after them in tears, and fain, 555
Fain had he follow'd their receding steps,
Though they to death were bound, and he to Heaven,
Then, but a power he could not break withheld
And as a stork which idle boys have trapp'd,
And tied him in a yard, at autumn sees 560
Flocks of his kind pass flying o'er his head
To warmer lands, and coasts that keep the sun,—
He strains to join their flight, and from his shed
Follows them with a long complaining cry—
So Hermod gazed, and yearn'd to join his kin 565

At last he sigh'd, and set forth back to Heaven.

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT⁸

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

I

Tristram

Tristram

Is she not come? The messenger was sure
Prop me upon the pillows once again—
Raise me, my page! this cannot long endure
—Christ, what a night! how the sleet whips the panel!
What lights will those out to the northward be? ,

The Page

The lanterns of the fishing-boats at sea.

Tristram

Soft—who is that, stands by the dying fire?

The Page

Iseult.

Tristram

Ah! not the Iseult I desire.

* * * *

What Knight is this so weak and pale,
Though the locks are yet brown on his noble head, 10
Propt on pillows in his bed,
Gazing seaward for the light
Of some ship that fights the gale
On this wild December night?

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT Title 1857 Tristan and Iseult. In 1869 Arnold reverted to spelling his hero's name Tristram, which had been used in the first three editions

9 The asterisks here and elsewhere in the poem were inserted in 1853

12 1852-7 Gazing seawards

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Over the sick man's feet is spread 15
 A dark green forest-dress,
 A gold harp leans against the bed,
 Ruddy in the fire's light
 I know him by his harp of gold,
 Famous in Arthur's court of old, 20
 I know him by his forest-dress—
 The peerless hunter, harper, knight,
 Tristram of Lyonesse

What Lady is this, whose silk attire
 Gleams so rich in the light of the fire? 25
 The ringlets on her shoulders lying
 In their fitting lustre vying
 With the clasp of burnish'd gold
 Which her heavy robe doth hold
 Her looks are mild, her fingers slight 30
 As the driven snow are white,
 But her cheeks are sunk and pale
 Is it that the bleak sea-gale
 Beating from the Atlantic sea
 On this coast of Brittany, 35
 Nips too keenly the sweet flower?
 Is it that a deep fatigue
 Hath come on her, a chilly fear,
 Passing all her youthful hour
 Spinning with her maidens here, 40
 Listlessly through the window-bars
 Gazing seawards many a league,
 From her lonely shore-built tower,
 While the knights are at the wars?
 Or, perhaps, has her young heart 45
 Felt already some deeper smart,

Between 25 and 26 1852 reads

Never surely has been seen
 So slight a form in so rich a dress

30, 31 *First inserted in 1853* 32 *1853-69* And her cheeks
 33 *1854* the black sea-gale

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Of those that in secret the heart-strings rive,
Leaving her sunk and pale, though fair²
Who is this snowdrop by the sea²—

I know her by her mildness rare, 50
Her snow-white hands, her golden hair,
I know her by her rich silk dress,
And her fragile loveliness—
The sweetest Christian soul alive,
Iseult of Brittany 55

Iseult of Brittany²—but where
Is that other Iseult fair,
That proud, first Iseult, Cornwall's queen?
She, whom Tristram's ship of yore
From Ireland to Cornwall bore, 60
To Tyntagel, to the side

Of King Marc, to be his bride²
She who, as they voyaged, quaff'd
With Tristram that spiced magic draught,
Which since then for ever rolls 65
Through their blood, and binds their souls,
Working love, but working teen²—

There were two Iseults who did sway
Each her hour of Tristram's day,
But one possess'd his waning time, 70
The other his resplendent prime
Behold her here, the patient flower,
Who possess'd his darker hour!

Iseult of the Snow-White Hand
Watches pale by Tristram's bed 75
She is here who had his gloom,
Where art thou who hadst his bloom²
One such kiss as those of yore
Might thy dying knight restore!

50 1852 her golden hair, 51 First inserted in 1853

56-82 First inserted in 1853 60, 61 1853, 1854

To Tyntagel from Ireland bore,
To Cornwall's palace, to the side

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Does the love-draught work no more?² 80
 Art thou cold, or false, or dead,
 Iseult of Ireland?

* * * *

Loud howls the wind, sharp patters the rain,
 And the knight sinks back on his pillows again
 He is weak with fever and pain, 85
 And his spirit is not clear
 Hark! he mutters in his sleep,
 As he wanders far from here,
 Changes place and time of year,
 And his closed eye doth sweep 90
 O'er some fair unwintery sea,
 Not this fierce Atlantic deep,
 While he mutters brokenly —

Tristram

The calm sea shines, loose hang the vessel's sails;
 Before us are the sweet green fields of Wales, 95
 And overhead the cloudless sky of May —
*'Ah, would I were in those green fields at play,
 Not pent on ship-board this delicious day!'*
*Tristram, I pray thee, of thy courtesy,
 Reach me my golden phial stands by thee, 100*
But pledge me in it first for courtesy —'
 Ha! dost thou start? are thy lips blanch'd like mine?²
 Child, 'tis no true draught this, 'tis poison'd wine!
 Iseult!

* * * *

Ah, sweet angels, let him dream! 105
 Keep his eyelids! let him seem .
 Not this fever-wasted wight

93 1852-77 As he 97 *The italics here and elsewhere were introduced*
 in 1853 100 1852-81 golden cup that stands by thee
 101 1852-69 And pledge 103 1852-81 'tis no water this,

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Thunn'd and paled before his time,
 But the brilliant youthful knight
 In the glory of his prime, 110
 Sitting in the gilded barge,
 At thy side, thou lovely charge,
 Bending gaily o'er thy hand,
 Iseult of Ireland!
 And she too, that princess fair, 115
 If her bloom be now less rare,
 Let her have her youth again—
 Let her be as she was then!
 Let her have her proud dark eyes,
 And her petulant quick replies— 120
 Let her sweep her dazzling hand
 With its gesture of command,
 And shake back her raven hair
 With the old imperious air!
 As of old, so let her be, 125
 That first Iseult, princess bright,
 Chatting with her youthful knight
 As he steers her o'er the sea,
 Quitting at her father's will
 The green isle where she was bred, 130
 And her bower in Ireland,
 For the surge-beat Cornish strand,
 Where the prince whom she must wed
 Dwells on loud Tyntagel's hill,
 High above the sounding sea 135
 And that potion rare her mother
 Gave her, that her future lord,
 Gave her, that King Marc and she,

134 1852-4 Keeps his court in Tyntagil 1857 Dwells on proud
 Tyntagel's hill, MS alterations in 1854 volume [not adopted] Sits on
 proud Tyntagel's hill, 135 1852-69 Fast beside the 136 1852-78
 golden cup her mother 1880 phial rare her mother The reading
 golden cup was restored in 1881, only to be changed to potion rare in 1885
 137 1852 Gave her, that her lord and she 138 Added in 1853

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Might drink it on their marriage-day,
 And for ever love each other— 140
 Let her, as she sits on board,
 Ah, sweet saints, unwittingly!
 See it shune, and take it up,
 And to Tristram laughing say
 'Sir Tristram, of thy courtesy, 145
 Pledge me in my golden cup!
 Let them drink it—let their hands
 Tremble, and their cheeks be flame,
 As they feel the fatal bands
 Of a love they dare not name, 150
 With a wild delicious pain,
 Twine about their hearts again!
 Let the early summer be
 Once more round them, and the sea
 Blue, and o'er its mirror kind 155
 Let the breath of the May-wind,
 Wandering through their drooping sails,
 Die on the green fields of Wales!
 Let a dream like this restore
 What his eye must see no more! 160

Tristram

Chill blows the wind, the pleasure-walks are drear—
 Madcap, what jest was this, to meet me here?
 Were feet like those made for so wild a way?
 The southern winter-parlour, by my fay,
 Had been the likeliest trysting-place to-day! 165
 'Tristram!—nay, nay—thou must not take my hand!—
 Tristram!—sweet love!—we are betray'd—out-plann'd
 Fly—save thyself—save me!—I dare not stay!—
 One last kiss first!—'Tis vain—to horse—away!

* * * *

Ah! sweet saints, his dream doth move 170
 Faster surely than it should,

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

From the fever in his blood!
 All the spring-time of his love
 Is already gone and past,
 And instead thereof is seen 175
 Its winter, which endureth still—
 Tyntagel on its surge-beat hill,
 The pleasaunce-walks, the weeping queen,
 The flying leaves, the straining blast,
 And that long, wild kiss—their last 180
 And this rough December-night,
 And his burning fever-pain,
 Mingle with his hurrying dream,
 Till they rule it, till he seem
 The press'd fugitive again, 185
 The love-desperate banish'd knight
 With a fire in his brain
 Flying o'er the stormy main
 —Whither does he wander now?
 Haply in his dreams the wind 190
 Wafts him here, and lets him find
 The lovely orphan child again
 In her castle by the coast,
 The youngest, fairest chatelaine,
 Whom this realm of France can boast, 195
 Our snowdrop by the Atlantic sea,
 Iseult of Brittany
 And—for through the haggard air,
 The stan'd arms, the matted hair
 Of that stranger-knight ill-starr'd, 200
 There gleam'd something, which recall'd
 The Tristram who in better days
 Was Launcelot's guest at Joyous Gard—
 Welcomed here, and here install'd,
 Tended of his fever here, 205
 Haply he seems again to move

177 1852-4 The palace towers of Tyntagel,
 this realm 201 1852-7 that recall'd

195 1852-81 That

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

His young guardian's heart with love,
 In his exiled loneliness,
 In his stately, deep distress,
 Without a word, without a tear 210
 —Ah! 'us well he should retrace
 His tranquil life in this lone place,
 His gentle bearing at the side
 Of his timid youthful bride,
 His long rambles by the shore 215
 On winter-evenings, when the roar
 Of the near waves came, sadly grand,
 Through the dark, up the drown'd sand,
 Or his endless reveries
 In the woods, where the gleams play 220
 On the grass under the trees,
 Passing the long summer's day
 Idle as a mossy stone
 In the forest-depths alone,
 The chase neglected, and his hound 225
 Couch'd beside him on the ground
 —Ah! what trouble's on his brow?
 Hither let him wander now,
 Hither, to the quiet hours
 Pass'd among these heaths of ours 230
 By the grey Atlantic sea,
 Hours, if not of ecstasy,
 From violent anguish surely free!

Tristram

All red with blood the whirling river flows,
 The wide plain rings, the dazed air throbs with blows. 235
 Upon us are the chivalry of Rome—
 Their spears are down, their steeds are bathed in foam
 'Up, Tristram, up,' men cry, 'thou moonstruck knight!
 What foul fiend rides thee? On into the fight!
 —Above the din her voice is in my ears, 240

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

I see her form glide through the crossing spears —
Iseult!

* * * *

Ah! he wanders forth again,
We cannot keep him, now, as then,
There's a secret in his breast 245
Which will never let him rest
These musing fits in the green wood
They cloud the brain, they dull the blood!
—His sword is sharp, his horse is good,
Beyond the mountains will he see 250
The famous towns of Italy,
And label with the blessed sign
The heathen Saxons on the Rhine
At Arthur's side he fights once more
With the Roman Emperor 255
There's many a gay knight where he goes
Will help him to forget his care,
The march, the leaguer, Heaven's blithe air,
The neighing steeds, the ringing blows—
Sick pining comes not where these are 260
Ah! what boots it, that the jest
Lightens every other brow,
What, that every other breast
Dances as the trumpets blow,
If one's own heart beats not light 265
On the waves of the toss'd fight,
If oneself cannot get free
From the clog of misery?
Thy lovely youthful wife grows pale
Watching by the salt sea-tide 270
With her children at her side
For the gleam of thy white sail
Home, Tristram, to thy halls again!

246 1852-69 That will never 266 1852 In the waves
269 1881 The lovely

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

To our lonely sea complain,
To our forests tell thy pain! 275

Tristram

All round the forest sweeps off, black in shade,
But it is moonlight in the open glade,
And in the bottom of the glade shine clear
The forest-chapel and the fountain near
—I think, I have a fever in my blood, 280
Come, let me leave the shadow of this wood,
Ride down, and bathe my hot brow in the flood
—Mild shines the cold spring in the moon's clear light,
God! 'tis *her* face plays in the waters bright
'Fair love,' she says, 'canst thou forget so soon, 285
At this soft hour, under this sweet moon?'—
Iseult!

* * * *

Ah, poor soul! if this be so,
Only death can balm thy woe
The solitudes of the green wood 290
Had no medicine for thy mood,
The rushing battle clear'd thy blood
As little as did solitude
—Ah! his eyelids slowly break
Their hot seals, and let him wake, 295
What new change shall we now see?
A happier? Worse it cannot be

Tristram

Is my page here? Come, turn me to the fire!
Upon the window-panes the moon shines bright,
The wind is down—but she'll not come to-night 300
Ah no! she is asleep in Cornwall now,
Far hence, her dreams are fair—smooth is her brow

301 1852-4 In Tyntagil 302 1852-4 her dreams are fair—her
sleep is still MS alterations (in 1854 volume) smooth is her brow

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Of me she reck's not, nor my vain desire
 —I have had dreams, I have had dreams, my page,
 Would take a score years from a strong man's age, 305
 And with a blood like mine, will leave, I fear,
 Scant leisure for a second messenger
 —My princess, art thou there? Sweet, do not wait!
 To bed, and sleep! my fever is gone by,
 To-night my page shall keep me company 310
 Where do the children sleep? kiss them for me!
 Poor child, thou art almost as pale as I,
 This comes of nursing long and watching late
 To bed—good night!

* * * *

She left the gleam-lit fireplace, 315
 She came to the bed-side,
 She took his hands in hers—her tears
 Down on his wasted fingers rain'd
 She raised her eyes upon his face—
 Not with a look of wounded pride, 320
 A look as if the heart complained—
 Her look was like a sad embrace,
 The gaze of one who can divine
 A grief, and sympathise
 Sweet flower! thy children's eyes 325
 Are not more innocent than thine
 But they sleep in shelter'd rest,
 Like helpless birds in the warm nest,
 On the castle's southern side,
 Where feebly comes the mournful roar 330
 Of buffeting wind and surging tide
 Through many a room and corridor
 —Full on their window the moon's ray
 Makes their chamber as bright as day

303 1852, 1853 nor of my desire 308 1852-81 Sweet, 'tis too late
 318 1852-81 on her slender fingers

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

It shines upon the blank white walls,	335
And on the snowy pillow falls,	
And on two angel-heads doth play	
Turn'd to each other—the eyes closed,	
The lashes on the cheeks reposed	
Round each sweet brow the cap close-set	340
Hardly lets peep the golden hair,	
Through the soft-open'd lips the air	
Scarcely moves the coverlet	
One little wandering arm is thrown	
At random on the counterpane,	345
And often the fingers close in haste	
As if their baby-owner chased	
The butterflies again	
This stir they have, and this alone,	
But else they are so still!	350
—Ah, tired madcaps! you lie still,	
But were you at the window now,	
To look forth on the fairy sight	
Of your illumined haunts by night,	
To see the park-glades where you play	355
Far lovelier than they are by day,	
To see the sparkle on the eaves,	
And upon every giant-bough	
Of those old oaks, whose wet red leaves	
Are jewell'd with bright drops of rain—	360
How would your voices run again!	
And far beyond the sparkling trees	
Of the castle-park one sees	
The bare heaths spreading, clear as day,	
Moor behind moor, far, far away,	365
Into the heart of Brittany	
And here and there, lock'd by the land,	
Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,	
And many a stretch of watery sand	
All shining in the white moon-beams—	370
But you see fairer in your dreams!	

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

What voices are these on the clear night-air?
What lights in the court—what steps on the stair?

II

Iseult of Ireland

Tristram

RAISE the light, my page! that I may see her —
Thou art come at last, then, haughty Queen!
Long I've waited, long I've fought my fever,
Late thou comest, cruel thou hast been

Iseult

Blame me not, poor sufferer! that I tarried, 5
Bound I was, I could not break the band
Chide not with the past, but feel the present!
I am here—we meet—I hold thy hand

Tristram

Thou art come, indeed—thou hast rejoin'd me,
Thou hast dared it—but too late to save 10
Fear not now that men should tax thine honour!
I am dying build—(thou may'st)—my grave!

Iseult

Tristram, ah, for love of Heaven, speak kindly!
What, I hear these bitter words from thee?
Sick with grief I am, and faint with travel— 15
Take my hand—dear Tristram, look on me!

Tristram

I forgot, thou comest from thy voyage—
Yes, the spray is on thy cloak and hair
But thy dark eyes are not dimm'd, proud Iseult!
And thy beauty never was more fair 20

II *Iseult of Ireland* 6 1852-7 I was bound, II 1852-69 thy
honour 13 1852-7 Tristram, for the love of Heaven, 1857
Tristan

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Iseult

Ah, harsh flatterer! let alone my beauty!
I, like thee, have left my youth afar
Take my hand, and touch these wasted fingers—
See my cheek and lips, how white they are!

Tristram

Thou art paler—but thy sweet charm, Iseult! 25
Would not fade with the dull years away
Ah, how fair thou standest in the moonlight!
I forgive thee, Iseult!—thou wilt stay?

Iseult

Fear me not, I will be always with thee,
I will watch thee, tend thee, soothe thy pain, 30
Sing thee tales of true, long-parted lovers,
Join'd at evening of their days again.

Tristram

No, thou shalt not speak! I should be finding
Something alter'd in thy courtly tone
Sit—sit by me! I will think, we've lived so 35
In the green wood, all our lives, alone

Iseult

Alter'd, Tristram? Not in courts, believe me,
Love like mine is alter'd in the breast,
Courtly life is light and cannot reach it—
Ah! it lives, because so deep-suppress'd! 40
What, thou think'st men speak in courtly chambers
Words by which the wretched are consoled?
What, thou think'st this aching brow was cooler,
Circled, Tristram, by a band of gold?

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Royal state with Marc, my deep-wrong'd husband— 45
 That was bliss to make my sorrows flee!
 Silken courtiers whispering honied nothings—
 Those were friends to make me false to thee!

Ah, on which, if both our lots were balanced,
 Was indeed the heaviest burden thrown— 50
 Thee, a pining exile in thy forest,
 Me, a smiling queen upon my throne?

Vain and strange debate, where both have suffer'd,
 Both have pass'd a youth consumed and sad,
 Both have brought their anxious day to evening, 55
 And have now short space for being glad!

Join'd we are henceforth, nor will thy people,
 Nor thy younger Iseult take it ill,
 That a former rival shares her office,
 When she sees her humbled, pale, and still 60

I, a faded watcher by thy pillow,
 I, a statue on thy chapel-floor,
 Pour'd in prayer before the Virgin-Mother,
 Rouse no anger, make no rivals more

She will cry 'Is this the foe I dreaded?' 65
 This his idol? this that royal bride?
 Ah, an hour of health would purge his eyesight!
 Stay, pale queen! for ever by my side?

Hush, no words! that smile, I see, forgives me
 I am now thy nurse, I bid thee sleep 70
 Close thine eyes—thus flooding moonlight blinds them!—
 Nay, all's well again! thou must not weep

45-8 This stanza appeared first in 1853, it was placed before the preceding stanza until 1877
 51 1852-7 a weeping exile 54 1852-77
 constrain'd and sad, 1878-81 repress'd and sad, MS alterations
 1881: forlorn and sad, [not adopted] 59 1852, 1853 an ancient rival
 63 1852-77 Pour'd in grief 65 1852 She will say—'Is this the form I dreaded?

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Tristram

I am happy! yet I feel, there's something
 Swells my heart, and takes my breath away
 Through a mist I see thee, near—come nearer! 75
 Bend—bend down!—I yet have much to say

Iseult

Heaven! his head sinks back upon the pillow—
 Tristram! Tristram! let thy heart not fail!
 Call on God and on the holy angels!
 What, love, courage!—Christ! he is so pale 80

Tristram

Hush, 'tis vain, I feel my end approaching!
 This is what my mother said should be,
 When the fierce pains took her in the forest,
 The deep draughts of death, in bearing me
 'Son,' she said, 'thy name shall be of sorrow, 85
 Tristram art thou call'd for my death's sake'
 So she said, and died in the drear forest
 Grief since then his home with me doth make
 I am dying—Start not, nor look wildly!
 Me, thy living friend, thou canst not save 90
 But, since living we were ununited,
 Go not far, O Iseult! from my grave
 Close mine eyes, then seek the princess Iseult,
 Speak her fair, she is of royal blood!
 Say, I will'd so, that thou stay beside me— 95
 She will grant it, she is kind and good
 Now to sail the seas of death I leave thee—
 One last kiss upon the living shore!

93 1852-77 Rise, go hence, and seek the princess Iseult
 95 1852-7 Say, I charg'd her, that ye live together — 1869-81 Say,
 I charg'd her, that thou stay beside me— MS alteration 1881 Say, I
 charg'd thee, that thou stay beside her [not adopted] 97, 98 1852.

Now stand clear before me in the moonlight.

Fare, farewell, thou long, thou deeply lov'd!

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Iseult

Tristram!—Tristram!—stay—receive me with thee!
Iseult leaves thee, Tristram! never more 100

* * * *

You see them clear—the moon shines bright,
Slow, slow and softly, where she stood,
She sinks upon the ground,—her hood
Had fallen back, her arms outspread
Still hold her lover's hand, her head 105
Is bow'd, half-buried, on the bed
O'er the blanch'd sheet her raven hair
Lies in disorder'd streams, and there,
Strung like white stars, the pearls still are,
And the golden bracelets, heavy and rare, 110
Flash on her white arms still
The very same which yesternight
Flash'd in the silver sconces' light,
When the feast was gay and the laughter loud
In Tyntagel's palace proud 115
But then they deck'd a restless ghost
With hot-flush'd cheeks and brilliant eyes,
And quivering lips on which the tide
Of courtly speech abruptly died,
And a glance which over the crowded floor, 120
The dancers, and the festive host,
Flew ever to the door
That the knights eyed her in surprise,
And the dames whispered scoffingly
'Her moods, good lack, they pass like showers! 125

99 100 1852 Tristram!—Tristram—stay—I come! Ah Sorrow—
Fool! thou missest—we are both unmov'd!
105 1852-81 lover's hands 1877 Still holds 114, 115 1852-4
When the feast was loud and the laughter shrill
In the banquet-hall of Tyntagel
120 1852-69 glance that

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

But yesternight and she would be
 As pale and still as wither'd flowers,
 And now to-night she laughs and speaks
 And has a colour in her cheeks,
 Christ keep us from such fantasy!— 130

Yes, now the longing is o'erpast,
 Which, dogg'd by fear and fought by shame
 Shook her weak bosom day and night,
 Consumed her beauty like a flame,
 And dimm'd it like the desert-blast 135
 And though the bed-clothes hide her face,
 Yet were it lifted to the light,
 The sweet expression of her brow
 Would charm the gazer, till his thought
 Erased the ravages of time, 140
 Fill'd up the hollow cheek, and brought
 A freshness back as of her prime—
 So healing is her quiet now
 So perfectly the lines express
 A tranquil, settled loveliness, 145
 Her younger rival's purest grace.

The air of the December-night
 Steals coldly around the chamber bright,
 Where those lifeless lovers be,
 Swinging with it, in the light 150
 Flaps the ghostlike tapestry
 And on the arras wrought you see
 A stately Huntsman, clad in green,
 And round him a fresh forest-scene

130 1852, 1853 Heaven keep us 131-46 First inserted in 1869,
 originally the first paragraph of 'Lines by a Death-bed' 135 1869
 (only) dimm'd her 136 1852, 1869-81 curtains hide her face,
 MS alteration (in 1881 volume) bed-clothes hide 145 1852 (only)
 placid, settled 146 1852 Her youngest rival's freshest grace 1869
 Her younger rival's calmest grace 149 First inserted in 1853 151
 1852 Shines the 152 1852 And there upon the wall you see

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

On that clear forest-knoll he stays, 155
 With his pack round him, and delays
 He stares and stares, with troubled face,
 At this huge, gleam-lit fireplace,
 At that bright, iron-figured door,
 And those blown rushes on the floor. 160
 He gazes down into the room
 With heated cheeks and flurried air,
 And to himself he seems to say
'What place is this, and who are they?
Who is that kneeling Lady fair? 165
And on his pillows that pale Knight
Who seems of marble on a tomb?
How comes it here, this chamber bright,
Through whose mullion'd windows clear
The castle-court all wet with rain, 170
The drawbridge and the moat appear,
And then the beach, and, mark'd with spray,
The sunken reefs, and far away
The unquiet bright Atlantic plain?
 —*What, has some glamour made me sleep,* 175
And sent me with my dogs to sweep,
By night, with boisterous bugle-peal,
Through some old, sea-side, knightly hall,

155 1852 'Tis noon with him, and yet he stays After 156 1852
 (only) has these lines

As rooted to the earth, nor sounds
 His lifted horn, nor cheers his hounds
 Into the tangled glen below
 Yet in the sedgy bottom there
 Where the deep forest stream creeps slow
 Fring'd with dead leaves and mosses rare,
 The wild boar harbours close, and feeds

157-60 1852 (only) these lines appear after line 174 158 1852 the
 huge 159 1852-7 the bright 160 1852 the blown 163,
 164 First inserted in 1853 In 1852 the knight is not represented as speaking;
 neither marks of quotation nor italics are used 175, 176 1852

Has then some glamour made him sleep,
 And sent him with his dogs to sweep,

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Not in the free green wood at all?
That Knight's asleep, and at her prayer 180
That Lady by the bed doth kneel—
Then hush, thou boisterous bugle-peal!
—The wild boar rustles in his lair,
The fierce hounds snuff the tainted air,
But lord and hounds keep rooted there 185

Cheer, cheer thy dogs into the brake,
O Hunter! and without a fear
Thy golden-tassell'd bugle blow,
And through the glades thy pastime take—
For thou wilt rouse no sleepers here! 190
For these thou seest are unmoved,
Cold, cold as those who lived and loved
A thousand years ago

III

Iseult of Brittany

A YEAR had flown, and o'er the sea away,
In Cornwall, Tristram and Queen Iseult lay,
In King Marc's chapel, in Tyntagel old—
There in a ship they bore those lovers cold

The young surviving Iseult, one bright day, 5
Had wander'd forth Her children were at play
In a green circular hollow in the heath
Which borders the sea-shore—a country path
Creeps over it from the till'd fields behind
The hollow's grassy banks are soft-inclined, 10
And to one standing on them, far and near

III *Iseult of Brittany* 1, 2 1852

A year had flown, and in the chapel old
Lay Tristram and queen Iseult dead and cold.

- 3, 4 *There is no equivalent of these lines in the edition of 1852. In 1853-4*
At Tyntagel, in King Marc's chapel old
There in a ship they bore those lovers cold

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

The lone unbroken view spreads bright and clear
 Over the waste This cirque of open ground
 Is light and green, the heather, which all round
 Creeps thickly, grows not here, but the pale grass 15
 Is strewn with rocks, and many a shiver'd mass
 Of vein'd white-gleaming quartz, and here and there
 Dotted with holly-trees and juniper
 In the smooth centre of the opening stood
 Three hollies side by side, and made a screen, 20
 Warm with the winter-sun, of burnish'd green
 With scarlet berries gemm'd, the fell-fare's food
 Under the glittering hollies Iseult stands,
 Watching her children play, their little hands
 Are busy gathering spars of quartz, and streams 25
 Of stagshorn for their hats, anon, with screams
 Of mad delight they drop their spoils, and bound
 Among the holly-clumps and broken ground,
 Racing full speed, and startling in their rush
 The fell-fares and the speckled missel-thrush 30
 Out of their glossy coverts,—but when now
 Their cheeks were flush'd, and over each hot brow,
 Under the feather'd hats of the sweet pair,
 In blinding masses shower'd the golden hair—
 Then Iseult call'd them to her, and the three 35
 Cluster'd under the holly-screen, and she
 Told them an old-world Breton history

Warm in their mantles wrapt the three stood there,
 Under the hollies, in the clear still air—
 Mantles with those rich furs deep glistering 40
 Which Venice ships do from swart Egypt bring
 Long they stay'd still—then, pacing at their ease,
 Moved up and down under the glossy trees
 But still, as they pursued their warm dry road,
 From Iseult's lips the unbroken story flow'd, 45
 And still the children listen'd, their blue eyes

13 1852 This ring 27 1881 thy drop [sic]

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Fix'd on their mother's face in wide surprise,
 Nor did their looks stray once to the sea-side,
 Nor to the brown heaths round them, bright and wide,
 Nor to the snow, which, though 't was all away 50
 From the open heath, still by the hedgerows lay,
 Nor to the shining sea-fowl, that with screams
 Bore up from where the bright Atlantic gleams,
 Swooping to landward, nor to where, quite clear,
 The fell-fares settled on the thickets near 55
 And they would still have listen'd, till dark night
 Came keen and chill down on the heather bright,
 But, when the red glow on the sea grew cold,
 And the grey turrets of the castle old
 Look'd sternly through the frosty evening-air, 60
 Then Iseult took by the hand those children fair,
 And brought her tale to an end, and found the path,
 And led them home over the darkening heath

And is she happy? Does she see unmoved
 The days in which she might have lived and loved 65
 Slip without bringing bliss slowly away,
 One after one, to-morrow like to-day?
 Joy has not found her yet, nor ever will—
 Is it this thought which makes her mien so still,
 Her features so fangued, her eyes, though sweet, 70
 So sunk, so rarely lifted save to meet
 Her children's? She moves slow, her voice alone
 Hath yet an infantine and silver tone,
 But even that comes languidly, in truth,
 She seems one dying in a mask of youth. 75
 And now she will go home, and softly lay
 Her laughing children in their beds, and play
 Awhile with them before they sleep, and then
 She'll light her silver lamp, which fishermen
 Dragging their nets through the rough waves, afar, 80
 Along this iron coast, know like a star,

69 1852-69 thought that

73 1852-7 Has yet

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

And take her broidery-frame, and there she'll sit
 Hour after hour, her gold curls sweeping it,
 Lifting her soft-bent head only to mind
 Her children, or to listen to the wind 85
 And when the clock peals midnight, she will move
 Her work away, and let her fingers rove
 Across the shaggy brows of Tristram's hound
 Who lies, guarding her feet, along the ground,
 Or else she will fall musing, her blue eyes 90
 Fixt, her slight hands clasp'd on her lap, then rise,
 And at her prie-dieu kneel, until she have told
 Her rosary-beads of ebony tipp'd with gold,
 Then to her soft sleep—and to-morrow'll be
 To-day's exact repeated effigy 95

Yes, it is lonely for her in her hall
 The children, and the grey-hair'd seneschal,
 Her women, and Sir Tristram's aged hound,
 Are there the sole companions to be found 100
 But these she loves, and noisier life than this
 She would find ill to bear, weak as she is
 She has her children, too, and night and day
 Is with them, and the wide heaths where they play,
 The hollies, and the cliff, and the sea-shore,
 The sand, the sea-birds, and the distant sails, 105
 These are to her dear as to them, the tales
 With which this day the children she beguiled
 She gleaned from Breton grandames, when a child,
 In every hut along this sea-coast wild
 She herself loves them still, and, when they are told, 110
 Can forget all to hear them, as of old

Dear saints, it is not sorrow, as I hear,
 Not suffering, which shuts up eye and ear
 To all that has delighted them before,

112-50 Omitted in 1853, 1854, reinserted in 1857 113 1852 and
 1857-69 that shuts 114 1852 and 1857-69 all which

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

And lets us be what we were once no more 115
 No, we may suffer deeply, yet retain
 Power to be moved and soothed, for all our pain,
 By what of old pleased us, and will again
 No, 'tis the gradual furnace of the world,
 In whose hot air our spirits are upcurl'd 120
 Until they crumble, or else grow like steel—
 Which kills in us the bloom, the youth, the spring—
 Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,
 But takes away the power—this can avail,
 By drying up our joy in everything, 125
 To make our former pleasures all seem stale
 This, or some tyrannous single thought, some fit
 Of passion, which subdues our souls to it,
 Till for its sake alone we live and move—
 Call it ambition, or remorse, or love— 130
 This too can change us wholly, and make seem
 All which we did before, shadow and dream

And yet, I swear, it angers me to see
 How this fool passion gulls men potently,
 Being, in truth, but a diseased unrest, 135
 And an unnatural overheat at best
 How they are full of languor and distress
 Not having it, which when they do possess,
 They straightway are burnt up with fume and care,
 And spend their lives in posting here and there 140
 Where this plague drives them, and have little ease,
 Are furious with themselves, and hard to please
 Like that bald Cæsar, the famed Roman wight,
 Who wept at reading of a Grecian knight
 Who made a name at younger years than he, 145
 Or that renown'd mirror of chivalry,
 Prince Alexander, Philip's peerless son,

132 1852 and 1857-69 All that 142 1852 Can never end their
 tasks, are hard to please 1857-69 Are fretful with themselves, and
 hard to please. 143 1857-77 bold Caesar,

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Who carried the great war from Macedon
 Into the Soudan's realm, and thundered on
 To die at thirty-five in Babylon 150

What tale did Iseult to the children say,
 Under the hollies, that bright winter's day?

She told them of the fairy-haunted land
 Away the other side of Brittany,
 Beyond the heaths, edged by the lonely sea, 155
 Of the deep forest-glades of Broce-liande,
 Through whose green boughs the golden sunshine creeps,
 Where Merlin by the enchanted thorn-tree sleeps
 For here he came with the fay Vivian,
 One April, when the warm days first began 160
 He was on foot, and that false fay, his friend,
 On her white palfrey, here he met his end,
 In these lone sylvan glades, that April-day.
 This tale of Merlin and the lovely fay
 Was the one Iseult chose, and she brought clear 165
 Before the children's fancy him and her

Blowing between the stems, the forest-air
 Had loosen'd the brown locks of Vivian's hair,
 Which play'd on her flush'd cheek, and her blue eyes
 Sparkled with mocking glee and exercise 170
 Her palfrey's flanks were mired and bathed in sweat,
 For they had travell'd far and not stopp'd yet
 A brier in that tangled wilderness
 Had scored her white right hand, which she allows
 To rest ungloved on her green riding-dress, 175
 The other ward off the drooping boughs
 But still she chatted on, with her blue eyes
 Fix'd full on Merlin's face, her stately prize
 Her 'haviour had*the morning's fresh clear grace,
 The spirit of the woods was in her face 180
 She look'd so witching fair, that learned wight

168 1852-77 the brown curls

173 1852-81 briar

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Forgot his craft, and his best wits took flight,
And he grew fond, and eager to obey
His mistress, use her empire as she may

They came to where the brushwood ceased, and day 185
Peer'd 'twixt the stems, and the ground broke away,
In a sloped sward down to a brawling brook,
And up as high as where they stood to look
On the brook's farther side was clear, but then
The underwood and trees began again 190
This open glen was studded thick with thorns
Then white with blossom, and you saw the horns,
Through last year's fern, of the shy fallow-deer
Who come at noon down to the water here
You saw the bright-eyed squirrels dart along 195
Under the thorns on the green sward, and strong
The blackbird whistled from the dingles near,
And the weird chipping of the woodpecker
Rang lonelily and sharp, the sky was fair,
And a fresh breath of spring stirr'd everywhere 200
Merlin and Vivian stopp'd on the slope's brow,
To gaze on the light sea of leaf and bough
Which glistering plays all round them, lone and mild,
As if to itself the quiet forest smiled
Upon the brow-top grew a thorn, and here 205
The grass was dry and moss'd, and you saw clear
Across the hollow, white anemonies
Starr'd the cool turf, and clumps of primroses
Ran out from the dark underwood behind
No fairer resting-place a man could find 210
'Here let us halt,' said Merlin then, and she
Nodded, and tied her palfrey to a tree

They sate them down together, and a sleep
Fell upon Merlin, more like death, so deep

189 1852-69 further 193 1852-77 the green fern 194 1852-
69 Which come 198 1852-7 light chipping 202 1852-77
on the green sea 203 1852-77 Which glistering lay

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Her finger on her lips, then Vivian rose, 215
And from her brown-lock'd head the wimple throws,
And takes it in her hand, and waves it over
The blossom'd thorn-tree and her sleeping lover
Nine times she waved the fluttering wimple round,
And made a little plot of magic ground 220
And in that daisied circle, as men say,
Is Merlin prisoner till the judgment-day,
But she herself whither she will can rove—
For she was passing weary of his love

SAINT BRANDAN

[*First published in FRASER'S MAGAZINE, July 1860*
Reprinted 1867 and thereafter]

SAINT BRANDAN sails the northern main,
The brotherhoods of saints are glad
He greets them once, he sails again,
So late!—such storms!—The Saint is mad!

He heard, across the howling seas, 5
Chime convent-bells on wintry nights,
He saw, on spray-swept Hebrides,
Twinkle the monastery-lights

But north, still north, Saint Brandan steer'd—
And now no bells, no convents more! 10
The hurtling Polar lights are near'd,
The sea without a human shore

At last—(it was the Christmas night,
Stars shone after a day of storm)—
He sees float past an iceberg white, 15
And on it—Christ!—a living form

SAINT BRANDAN

That furtive mien, that scowling eye,
Of hair that red and tufted fell——
It is—Oh, where shall Brandan fly?—
The traitor Judas, out of hell!

20

Palsied with terror, Brandan sate,
The moon was bright, the iceberg near
He hears a voice sigh humbly 'Wait!
By high permission I am here.

'One moment wait, thou holy man!
On earth my crime, my death, they knew,
My name is under all men's ban—
Ah, tell them of my respite too!

25

"Tell them, one blessed Christmas-night—
(It was the first after I came,
Breathing self-murder, frenzy, spite,
To rue my guilt in endless flame)—

30

'I felt, as I in torment lay
'Mid the souls plagued by heavenly power
An angel touch mine arm, and say
Go hence and cool thyself an hour!

35

"Ah, whence this mercy, Lord?" I said.
*The Leper recollect, said he,
Who ask'd the passers-by for aid,
In Joppa, and thy charity*

40

"Then I remember'd how I went,
In Joppa, through the public street,
One morn when the sirocco spent
Its storms of dust with burning heat,

'And in the street a leper sate,
Shivering with fever, naked, old,
Sand raked his sores from heel to pate,
The hot wind fever'd him five-fold

45

18 1860 black and tufted

SAINT BRANDAN

'He gazed upon me as I pass'd,
And murmur'd *Help me, or I die!*— 50
To the poor wretch my cloak I cast,
Saw him look eased, and hurried by

'Oh Brandan, think what grace divine,
What blessing must full goodness shower,
When fragment of it small, like mine, 55
Hath such inestimable power!

'Well-fed, well-clothed, well-friended, I
Did that chance act of good, that one!
Then went my way to kill and lie—
Forgot my good as soon as done 60

'That germ of kindness, in the womb
Of mercy caught, did not expire,
Outlives my guilt, outlives my doom,
And friends me in the pit of fire.

'Once every year, when carols wake, 65
On earth, the Christmas-night's repose,
Arising from the sinners' lake,
I journey to these healing snows

'I stanch with ice my burning breast,
With silence balm my whirling brain 70
O Brandan! to this hour of rest
That Joppa leper's ease was pain'—

Tears started to Saint Brandan's eyes,
He bow'd his head, he breathed a prayer—
Then look'd, and lo, the frosty skies! 75
The iceberg, and no Judas there!

54 1860-7 true goodness	55 1860 When semblance of it faint
1867 If semblance of it faint	1868 If fragment of it small
56 1860 unalienable power	60 1860 my deed
	75, 76 1860-9
When he look'd up—tenantless lies	
The iceberg in the frosty air!	
76 1877 The iceberg and no tenant there!	

THE NECKAN

[*First published 1853 Reprinted 1854, '57, '69, and thereafter*]

In summer, on the headlands,
The Baltic Sea along,
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,
And sings his plaintive song
Green rolls beneath the headlands, 5
Green rolls the Baltic Sea,
And there, below the Neckan's feet,
His wife and children be
He sings not of the ocean,
Its shells and roses pale, 10
Of earth, of earth the Neckan sings,
He hath no other tale
He sits upon the headlands,
And sings a mournful stave
Of all he saw and felt on earth 15
Far from the kind sea-wave
Sings how, a knight, he wander'd
By castle, field, and town—
But earthly knights have harder hearts
Than the sea-children own 20
Sings of his earthly bridal—
Priest, knights, and ladies gay
'—And who art thou,' the priest began,
'Sir Knight, who wedd'st to-day?'—
'—I am no knight,' he answered, 25
'From the sea-waves I come'—
The knights drew sword, the ladies scream'd,
The surpliced priest stood dumb

16 1853-7 the green sea wave.

THE NECKAN

He sings how from the chapel
 He vanish'd with his bride, 30
 And bore her down to the sea-halls,
 Beneath the salt sea-tide

He sings how she sits weeping
 'Mid shells that round her lie
 '—False Neckan shares my bed,' she weeps, 35
 'No Christian mate have I'—

He sings how through the billows
 He rose to earth again,
 And sought a priest to sign the cross,
 That Neckan Heaven might gain 40

He sings how, on an evening,
 Beneath the birch-trees cool,
 He sate and play'd his harp of gold,
 Beside the river-pool

Beside the pool sate Neckan— 45
 Tears fill'd his mild blue eye
 On his white mule, across the bridge,
 A cassock'd priest rode by

'—Why sitt'st thou there, O Neckan,
 And play'st thy harp of gold? 50
 Sooner shall this my staff bear leaves,
 Than thou shalt Heaven behold'—

But, lo, the staff, it budded!
 It green'd, it branch'd, it waved
 '—O ruth of God,' the priest cried out, 55
 'This lost sea-creature saved!'

32 1857 (only) the cold sea tide 46 1853-7 cold blue eye.
 MS corrections (in 1854 volume) cold deleted for mild and then for kind
 53-6 This stanza was added in 1869.

THE NECKAN

The cassock'd priest rode onwards,
And vanished with his mule,
But Neckan in the twilight grey
Wept by the river-pool 60

He wept 'The earth hath kindness,
The sea, the starry poles,
Earth, sea, and sky, and God above—
But, ah, not human souls!'

In summer, on the headlands, 65
The Baltic Sea along,
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,
And sings this plaintive song

THE FORSAKEN MERICAN

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

COME, dear children, let us away,
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow, 5
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go— 10
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know
'Margaret! Margaret!'
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear, 15

59 1853-7 And Neckan

61-4 This stanza was added in 1869

61 1869 (only) He said
mused

MS (in 1854 volume), not adopted

THE FORSAKEN MERICAN 4 1849-57 shorewards 5 1849-57.
seawards

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Children's voices, wild with pain—
 Surely she will come again!
 Call her once and come away,
 This way, this way!
 'Mother dear, we cannot stay!
 The wild white horses foam and fret'
 Margaret! Margaret! 20

Come, dear children, come away down,
 Call no more!
 One last look at the white-wall'd town,
 And the little grey church on the windy shore, 25
 Then come down!
 She will not come though you call all day,
 Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
 We heard the sweet bells over the bay? 30
 In the caverns where we lay,
 Through the surf and through the swell,
 The far-off sound of a silver bell?
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep, 35
 Where the winds are all asleep,
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
 Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground, 40
 Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
 Dry their mail and bask in the brine,
 Where great whales come sailing by,
 Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
 Round the world for ever and aye? 45
 When did music come this way?
 Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
 (Call yet once) that she went away?

20 From 1849 to 1869 the quotation consisted of this single line

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Once she sate with you and me, 50
 On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
 And the youngest sate on her knee
 She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
 When down swung the sound of a far-off bell
 She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea, 55
 She said 'I must go, for my kinsfolk pray,
 In the little grey church on the shore to-day
 'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
 And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee '
 I said 'Go up, dear heart, through the waves, 60
 Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!'
 She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay
 Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
 'The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan, 65
 Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say,
 Come!' I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.
 We went up the beach, by the sandy down
 Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town,
 Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still, 70
 To the little grey church on the windy hill
 From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
 But we stood without in the cold blowing airs
 We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
 And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes
 She sate by the pillar, we saw her clear
 'Margaret, hush! come quick, we are here!
 Dear heart,' I said, 'we are long alone,
 The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan
 But, ah, she gave me never a look, 80
 For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!
 Loud prays the priest, shut stands the door

54 1849-69 the far-off
 within quotation-marks

82 From 1849 to 1857 this line was enclosed

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down! 85
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully
Hark what she sings 'O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy! 90
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well,
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully, 95
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea,
And her eyes are set in a stare, 100
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh, 105
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair

Come away, away children,
Come children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly, 110
Lights shine in the town
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door,
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar 115

96 1849-77 the shuttle falls 110 1849 The salt tide rolls seaward
1853-81 The hoarse wind blows colder, MS alteration (in 1881
volume) coldly,

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl
Singing 'Here came a mortal, 120
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea ']

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow, 125
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low,
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly 130
On the blanch'd sands a gloom,
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry 135
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town,
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down
Singing 'There dwells a loved one, 140
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea '

SONNETS

AUSTERITY OF POETRY

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

THAT son of Italy who tried to blow,⁹
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,
In his light youth amid a festal throng
Sate with his bride to see a public show

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow 5
Youth like a star, and what to youth belong—
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong
A prop gave way! crash fell a platform! lo,

'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay!
Shuddering, they drew her garments off—and found 10
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin

Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,
Radiant, adorn'd outside, a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within

A PICTURE AT NEWSTEAD

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

WHAT made my heart, at Newstead, fullest swell?—
'Twas not the thought of Byron, of his cry
Stormily sweet, his Titan-agony,
It was the sight of that Lord Arundel

Who struck, in heat, his child he loved so well, 5
And his child's reason flicker'd, and did die
Painted (he will'd it) in the gallery
They hang, the picture doth the story tell

A PICTURE AT NEWSTEAD 5 1867 (*only*) the child 6 1867 (*only*)
the child's

A PICTURE AT NEWSTEAD

Behold the stern, mail'd father, staff in hand!
The little fair-hair'd son, with vacant gaze, 10
Where no more lights of sense or knowledge are!

Methinks the woe, which made that father stand
Baring his dumb remorse to future days,
Was woe than Byron's woe more tragic far.

RACHEL

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

I

IN Paris all look'd hot and like to fade
Sere, in the garden of the Tuileries,
Sere with September, droop'd the chestnut-trees
'Twas dawn, a brougham roll'd through the streets
and made

Halt at the white and silent colonnade 5
Of the French Theatre Worn with disease,
Rachel, with eyes no gazing can appease,
Sate in the brougham and those blank walls survey'd

She follows the gay world, whose swarms have fled
To Switzerland, to Baden, to the Rhine, 10
Why stops she by this empty play-house drear?

Ah, where the spirit its highest life hath led,
All spots, match'd with that spot, are less divine,
And Rachel's Switzerland, her Rhine, is here!

II

UNTO a lonely villa, in a dell
Above the fragrant warm Provençal shore,
The dying Rachel in a chair they bore
Up the steep pine-plumed paths of the Estrelle,

RACHEL 2 1867-9 Brown in the garden 3 1867-9 Brown with
September

RACHEL

And laid her in a stately room, where fell 5
The shadow of a marble Muse of yore,
The rose-crown'd queen of legendary lore,
Polymnia, full on her death-bed —'Twas well!
The fret and misery of our northern towns,
In this her life's last day, our poor, our pain, 10
Our jangle of false wits, our climate's frowns,
Do for this radiant Greek-soul'd artist cease,
Sole object of her dying eyes remain
The beauty and the glorious art of Greece

III

SPRUNG from the blood of Israel's scatter'd race,
At a mean inn in German Aarau born,
To forms from antique Greece and Rome upturn,
Trick'd out with a Parisian speech and face,
Imparting life renew'd, old classic grace, 5
Then, soothing with thy Christian strain forlorn,
A-Kempis! her departing soul outworn,
While by her bedside Hebrew rites have place—
Ah, not the radiant spirit of Greece alone
She had—one power, which made her breast its home! 10
In her, like us, there clash'd, contending powers,
Germany, France, Christ, Moses, Athens, Rome
The strife, the mixture in her soul, are ours,
Her genius and her glory are her own

WORLDLY PLACE

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

EVEN in a palace, life may be led well!
So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,
Marcus Aurelius But the stifling den
Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,

WORLDLY PLACE 2 1867-9 So spoke

WORLDLY PLACE

Our freedom for a little bread we sell, 5
And drudge under some foolish master's ken
Who rates us if we peer outside our pen—
Match'd with a palace, is not this a hell?

Even in a palace! On his truth sincere,
Who spoke these words, no shadow ever came, 10
And when my ill-school'd spirit is aflame

Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,
I'll stop, and say 'There were no succour here!
The aids to noble life are all within'

EAST LONDON

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, look'd thrice dispirited

I met a preacher there I knew, and said 5
'Ill and o'erwork'd, how fare you in this scene?'—
'Bravely!' said he, 'for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread*'

O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light, 10
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam—
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

WEST LONDON

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

Crouch'd on the pavement, close by Belgrave Square,
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied
A babe was in her arms, and at her side
A girl, their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.

WEST LONDON

Some labouring men, whose work lay somewhere there, 5
Pass'd opposite, she touch'd her girl, who hied
Across, and begg'd, and came back satisfied
The rich she had let pass with frozen stare
Thought I 'Above her state this spirit towers,
She will not ask of aliens, but of friends, 10
Of sharers in a common human fate
'She turns from that cold succour, which attends
The unknown little from the unknowing great,
And points us to a better time than ours'

EAST AND WEST

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

In the bare midst of Anglesey they show
Two springs which close by one another play,
And, 'Thirteen hundred years ago,' they say,
'Two saints met often where those waters flow
'One came from Penmon westward, and a glow 5
Whiten'd his face from the sun's fronting ray,
Eastward the other, from the dying day,
And he with unsunn'd face did always go'
Seiriol the Bright, Kybi the Dark! men said
The seer from the East was then in light, 10
The seer from the West was then in shade
Ah! now 'tis changed In conquering sunshine bright
The man of the bold West now comes array'd,
He of the mystic East is touch'd with night

THE BETTER PART

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

LONG fed on boundless hopes, O race of man,
How angrily thou spurn'st all simpler fare!
'Christ,' some one says, 'was human as we are,
No judge eyes us from Heaven, our sin to scan,

THE BETTER PART Title 1867, 1868 Anti-Desperation

THE BETTER PART

'We live no more, when we have done our span'— 5
'Well, then, for Christ,' thou answerest, 'who can care'
From sin, which Heaven records not, why forbear?
Live we like brutes our life without a plan!

So answerest thou, but why not rather say
'Hath man no second life?'—*Pitch this one high!* 10
Sits there no judge in Heaven, our sin to see?

*'More strictly, then, the inward judge obey!
Was Christ a man like us? Ah! let us try
If we then, too, can be such men as he!'*

THE DIVINITY

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

'Yes, write it in the rock,' Saint Bernard said,
'Grave it on brass with adamantine pen!
'Tis God himself becomes apparent, when
God's wisdom and God's goodness are display'd,

'For God of these his attributes is made'— 5
Well spake the impetuous Saint, and bore of men
The suffrage captive, now, not one in ten
Recalls the obscure opposer he outweigh'd 10

God's wisdom and God's goodness!—Ay, but fools
Mis-define these till God knows them no more 10
Wisdom and goodness, they are God!—what schools

Have yet so much as heard this simpler lore?
Thus no Saint preaches, and thus no Church rules,
'Tis in the desert, now and heretofore

IMMORTALITY

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

FoIL'D by our fellow-men, depress'd, outworn,
We leave the brutal world to take its way,
And, *Patience!* in another life, we say,
The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne

And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn 5
The world's pool, routed leavings² or will they,
Who fail'd under the heat of this life's day,
Support the fervours of the heavenly morn²

No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun, 10
And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,

From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life

THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH THE KID

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

He saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save
So rang Tertullian's sentence, on the side
Of that un pitying Phrygian sect which cried 11
'Him can no fount of fresh forgiveness lave,

'Who sins, once wash'd by the baptismal wave'— 5
So spake the fierce Tertullian But she sigh'd,
The infant Church! of love she felt the tide
Stream on her from her Lord's yet recent grave

And then she smiled, and in the Catacombs,
With eye suffused but heart inspired true, 10
On those walls subterranean, where she hid

Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,
She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew—
And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid

THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH THE KID 12 1867-77 in ignominy,

MONICA'S LAST PRAYER¹²

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

'Ah, could thy grave at home, at Carthage, be'
Care not for that, and lay me where I fall'
Everywhere heard will be the judgment-call,
But at God's altar, oh' remember me

Thus Monica, and died in Italy 5
Yet fervent had her longing been, through all
Her course, for home at last, and burial
With her own husband, by the Libyan sea

Had been¹ but at the end, to her pure soul
All tie with all beside seem'd vain and cheap, 10
And union before God the only care

Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole
Yet we her memory, as she pray'd, will keep,
Keep by this *Life in God, and union there'*

1 1867-9 'Oh, could

LYRIC POEMS

SWITZERLAND

I MEETING

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

AGAIN I see my bliss at hand,
The town, the lake are here,
My Marguerite smiles upon the strand,¹³
Unalter'd with the year

I know that graceful figure fair, 5
That cheek of languid hue,
I know that soft, enkerchief'd hair,
And those sweet eyes of blue

Again I spring to make my choice,
Again in tones of ire 10
I hear a God's tremendous voice
'Be counsell'd, and retire'

Ye guiding Powers who join and part,
What would ye have with me?
Ah, warn some more ambitious heart, 15
And let the peaceful be!

2 PARTING

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

YE storm-winds of Autumn!
Who rush by, who shake
The window, and ruffle
The gleam-lighted lake,

1 Meeting Title, 1852-7 The Lake, from 1853 through 1869 was second poem of 'Switzerland' group

2 Parting Title 1853-7 Switzerland IV Parting, 1869 Switzerland 3 Parting

SWITZERLAND

Who cross to the hill-side 5
 Thin-sprinkled with farms,
 Where the high woods strip sadly
 Their yellowing arms—
 Ye are bound for the mountains!
 Ah! with you let me go 10
 Where your cold, distant barrier,
 The vast range of snow,
 Through the loose clouds lifts dimly
 Its white peaks in air—
 How deep is their stillness! 15
 Ah, would I were there!

But on the stairs what voice is this I hear,
 Buoyant as morning, and as morning clear?
 Say, has some wet bird-haunted English lawn
 Lent it the music of its trees at dawn? 20
 Or was it from some sun-fleck'd mountain-brook
 That the sweet voice its upland clearness took?
 Ah! it comes nearer—
 Sweet notes, this way!

Hark! fast by the window 25
 The rushing winds go,
 To the ice-cumber'd gorges,
 The vast seas of snow!
 There the torrents drive upward
 Their rock-strangled hum, 30
 There the avalanche thunders
 The hoarse torrent dumb
 —I come, O ye mountains!
 Ye torrents, I come!

But who is this, by the half-open'd door, 35
 Whose figure casts a shadow on the floor?
 The sweet blue eyes—the soft, ash-colour'd hair—
 The cheeks that still their gentle paleness wear—

SWITZERLAND

The lovely lips, with their arch smile that tells
 The unconquer'd joy in which her spirit dwells— 40
 Ah! they bend nearer—
 Sweet lips, this way!

Hark! the wind rushes past us!
 Ah! with that let me go
 To the clear, waning hill-side, 45
 Unspotted by snow,
 There to watch, o'er the sunk vale,
 The frore mountain-wall,
 Where the niched snow-bed sprays down
 Its powdery fall 50
 There its dusky blue clusters
 The aconite spreads,
 There the pines slope, the cloud-strips
 Hung soft in their heads
 No life but, at moments, 55
 The mountain-bee's hum.
 —I come, O ye mountains!
 Ye pine-woods, I come!

Forgive me! forgive me!
 Ah, Marguerite, fain 60
 Would these arms reach to clasp thee!
 But see! 'tis in vain

In the void air, towards thee,
 My stretch'd arms are cast,
 But a sea rolls between us— 65
 Our different past!

To the lips, ah! of others
 Those lips have been prest,
 And others, ere I was, 70
 Were strain'd to that breast,

SWITZERLAND

Far, far from each other
 Our spirits have grown,
 And what heart knows another?
 Ah! who knows his own?

Blow, ye winds! lift me with you! 75
 I come to the wild
 Fold closely, O Nature!
 Thine arms round thy child

To thee only God granted 80
 A heart ever new—
 To all always open,
 To all always true

Ah! calm me, restore me;
 And dry up my tears 85
 On thy high mountain-platforms,
 Where morn first appears,

Where the white mists, for ever,
 Are spread and upfurled—
 In the stir of the forces 90
 Whence issued the world.

3 A FAREWELL

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1854, '57, '69, and thereafter]

My horse's feet beside the lake,
 Where sweet the unbroken moonbeams lay,
 Sent echoes through the night to wake
 Each glistening strand, each heath-fringed bay.

The poplar avenue was pass'd, 5
 And the roof'd bridge that spans the stream,
 Up the steep street I hurried fast,
 Led by thy taper's starlike beam

3 *A Farewell. Title 1854, 1857* Switzerland V *A Farewell,* 1869
 Switzerland 4. *A Farewell* 2 1852 Lit by

SWITZERLAND

I came! I saw thee rise!—the blood
 Pour'd flushing to thy languid cheek. 10
 Lock'd in each other's arms we stood,
 In tears, with hearts too full to speak
 Days flew,—ah, soon I could discern
 A trouble in thine alter'd air!
 Thy hand lay languidly in mine, 15
 Thy cheek was grave, thy speech grew rare
 I blame thee not!—this heart, I know,
 To be long loved was never framed,
 For something in its depths doth glow
 Too strange, too restless, too untamed 20
 And women—things that live and move
 Mined by the fever of the soul—
 They seek to find in those they love
 Stern strength, and promise of control
 They ask not kindness, gentle ways— 25
 These they themselves have tried and known,
 They ask a soul which never sways
 With the blind gusts that shake their own
 I too have felt the load I bore
 In a too strong emotion's sway, 30
 I too have wish'd, no woman more,
 This starting, feverish heart away
 I too have long'd for trenchant force,
 And will like a dividing spear,
 Have praised the keen, unscrupulous course, 35
 Which knows no doubt, which feels no fear
 But in the world I learnt, what there
 Thou too wilt surely one day prove,
 That will, that energy, though rare,
 Are yet far, far less rare than love 40
 10 1852 Came flooding to 1854-7 Came flushing to
 27 1852-7 that never 28 1852-7 which shake

SWITZERLAND

Go, then!—till time and fate impress
 This truth on thee, be mine no more!
 They will!—for thou, I feel, not less
 Than I, wast destined to this lore

We school our manners, act our parts— 45
 But He, who sees us through and through,
 Knows that the bent of both our hearts
 Was to be gentle, tranquil, true

And though we wear out life, alas!
 Distracted as a homeless wind, 50
 In beating where we must not pass,
 In seeking what we shall not find,

Yet we shall one day gain, life past,
 Clear prospect o'er our being's whole,
 Shall see ourselves, and learn at last 55
 Our true affinities of soul

We shall not then deny a course
 To every thought the mass ignore,
 We shall not then call hardness force,
 Nor lightness wisdom any more 60

Then, in the eternal Father's smile,
 Our soothed, encouraged souls will dare
 To seem as free from pride and guile,
 As good, as generous, as they are

Then we shall know our friends!—though much 65
 Will have been lost—the help in strife,
 The thousand sweet, still joys of such
 As hand in hand face earthly life—

Though these be lost, there will be yet
 A sympathy august and pure, 70
 Ennobled by a vast regret,
 And by contrition seal'd thrice sure

43 1852-69 no less 44 1852-7 wert destin'd
 63 1854-69 To seem 64 1854-69 they are

SWITZERLAND

And we, whose ways were unlike here,
 May then more neighbouring courses ply,
 May to each other be brought near,
 And greet across infinity 75

How sweet, unreach'd by earthly jars,
 My sister! to maintain with thee
 The hush among the shining stars,
 The calm upon the moonlit sea! 80

How sweet to feel, on the boon air,
 All our unquiet pulses cease!
 To feel that nothing can impair
 The gentleness, the thirst for peace—

The gentleness too rudely hurl'd 85
 On this wild earth of hate and fear,
 The thirst for peace a raving world
 Would never let us satiate here

4. ISOLATION TO MARGUERITE

[First published 1857 Reprinted 1869 and thereafter]

We were apart, yet, day by day,
 I bade my heart more constant be
 I bade it keep the world away,
 And grow a home for only thee,
 Nor fear'd but thy love likewise grew, 5
 Like mine, each day, more tried, more true.

The fault was grave! I might have known,
 What far too soon, alas! I learn'd—
 The heart can bind itself alone,
 And faith may oft be unreturn'd 10
 Self-sway'd our feelings ebb and swell—
 Thou lov'st no more,—Farewell! Farewell!

78 1852-69 to behold

4 *Isolation To Marguerite Title 1857 Switzerland VI To Marguerite,*
 1869 Switzerland 6 *Isolation To Marguerite* 10 1857-69 faith is
 often 1877 faith may well be

SWITZERLAND

Farewell!—and thou, thou lonely heart,
Which never yet without remorse
Even for a moment didst depart 15
From thy remote and spheréd course
To haunt the place where passions reign—
Back to thy solitude again!

Back! with the conscious thrill of shame
Which Luna felt, that summer-night, 20
Flash through her pure immortal frame,
When she forsook the starry height
To hang over Endymion's sleep
Upon the pine-grown Latman steep

Yet she, chaste queen, had never proved 25
How vain a thing is mortal love,
Wandering in Heaven, far removed
But thou hast long had place to prove
Thus truth—to prove, and make thine own
'Thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone' 30

Or, if not quite alone, yet they
Which touch thee are unmating things—
Ocean and clouds and night and day,
Lorn autumns and triumphant springs,
And life, and others' joy and pain, 35
And love, if love, of happier men

Of happier men—for they, at least,
Have *dream'd* two human hearts might blend
In one, and were through faith released
From isolation without end 40
Prolong'd, nor knew, although not less
Alone than thou, their loneliness

SWITZERLAND

5. TO MARGUERITE—CONTINUED

[*First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter*]

YES! in the sea of life enisled,
 With echoing straits between us thrown,
 Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
 We mortal millions live *alone*
 The islands feel the encircling flow, 5
 And then their endless bounds they know

But when the moon their hollows lights,
 And they are swept by balms of spring,
 And in their glens, on starry nights,
 The nightingales divinely sing, 10
 And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
 Across the sounds and channels pour—

Oh! then a longing like despair
 Is to their farthest caverns sent,
 For surely once, they feel, we were 15
 Parts of a single continent!
 Now round us spreads the watery plain—
 Oh might our margs meet again!

Who order'd, that their longing's fire
 Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd? 20
 Who renders vain their deep desire?
 A God, a God their severance ruled!
 And bade betwixt their shores to be
 The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea

*Title 1852 To Marguerite, / In Returning a Volume of the Letters of
 Ortis, 1853 Switzerland V To Marguerite, 1854 Switzerland
 VI To Marguerite, 1857 Switzerland VII Isolation, 1869
 Switzerland 7 To Marguerite. Continued*

SWITZERLAND

6 ABSENCE

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

In this fair stranger's eyes of grey
Thine eyes, my love! I see
I shiver, for the passing day
Had borne me far from thee

This is the curse of life! that not 5
A nobler, calmer train
Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot
Our passions from our brain,

But each day brings its petty dust
Our soon-choked souls to fill, 10
And we forget because we must
And not because we will

I struggle towards the light, and ye,
Once-long'd-for storms of love!
If with the light ye cannot be, 15
I bear that ye remove

I struggle towards the light—but oh,
While yet the night is chill,
Upon time's barren, stormy flow,
Stay with me, Marguerite, still! 20

7 THE TERRACE AT BERNE

(COMPOSED TEN YEARS AFTER THE PRECEDING)

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

TEN years!—and to my waking eye
Once more the roofs of Berne appear,
The rocky banks, the terrace high,
The stream!—and do I linger here?

6 *Absence* Title 1852 *Absence*, 1853 *Switzerland VI Absence*,
1854 *Switzerland VII Absence*, 1857 *Switzerland VIII Absence*,
1869 *Switzerland 5 Absence* 3 1852-69 *I shudder*
7 *The Terrace at Berne* Title 1867 *The Terrace at Berne*, 1869
Switzerland 8 The Terrace at Berne / (Composed Ten Years after the
Preceding)

SWITZERLAND

The clouds are on the Oberland,
The Jungfrau snows look faint and far,
But bright are those green fields at hand,
And through those fields comes down the Aar,

And from the blue twin-lakes it comes,
Flows by the town, the churchyard fair,
And 'neath the garden-walk it hums,
The house!—and is my Marguerite there?

Ah, shall I see thee, while a flush
Of startled pleasure floods thy brow,
Quick through the oleanders brush,
And clap thy hands, and cry '*Tis thou!*'

Or hast thou long since wander'd back,
Daughter of France! to France, thy home,
And flitted down the flowery track
Where feet like thine too lightly come?

Doth riotous laughter now replace
Thy smile, and rouge, with stony glare,
Thy cheek's soft hue, and fluttering lace
The kerchief that enwound thy hair?

Or is it over?—art thou dead?—
Dead!—and no warning shiver ran
Across my heart, to say thy thread
Of life was cut, and closed thy span!

Could from earth's ways that figure slight
Be lost, and I not feel 'twas so?
Of that fresh voice the gay delight
Fail from earth's air, and I not know?

Or shall I find thee still, but changed,
But not the Marguerite of thy prime?
With all thy being re-arranged,
Pass'd through the crucible of time,

SWITZERLAND

With spirit vanish'd, beauty waned,
And hardly yet a glance, a tone,
A gesture—anything—retain'd
Of all that was my Marguerite's own? 40

I will not know! For wherefore try,
To things by mortal course that live,
A shadowy durability,
For which they were not meant, to give?

Like driftwood spars, which meet and pass 45
Upon the boundless ocean-plain,
So on the sea of life, alas!
Man meets man—meets, and quits again

I knew it when my life was young,
I feel it still, now youth is o'er 50
—The mists are on the mountain hung,
And Marguerite I shall see no more

THE STRAYED REVELLER

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

THE PORTICO OF CIRCE'S PALACE EVENING

A Youth Circe

The Youth

FASTER, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,
Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms, 5
Sweep through my soul!

45 MS (dated 1879, not adopted) Like ships that meet and speak and
pass 48 1867-9 Man meets man, meets, and leaves again.

51 1867-9 the mountains

THE STRAYED REVELLER. Indication of place and time first added in 1853

THE STRAYED REVELLER

Thou standest, smiling
Down on me! thy right arm,
Lean'd up against the column there,
Props thy soft cheek,
Thy left holds, hanging loosely,
The deep cup, ivy-cinctured,
I held but now

10

Is it, then, evening
So soon? I see, the night-dews,
Cluster'd in thick beads, dim
The agate brooch-stones
On thy white shoulder,
The cool night-wind, too,
Blows through the portico,
Stirs thy hair, Goddess,
Waves thy white robe!

15

20

Circe

Whence art thou, sleeper?

The Youth

When the white dawn first
Through the rough fir-planks
Of my hut, by the chestnuts,
Up at the valley-head,
Came breaking, Goddess!
I sprang up, I threw round me
My dappled fawn-skin,
Passing out, from the wet turf,
Where they lay, by the hut door,
I snatch'd up my vine-crown, my fir-staff,
All drench'd in dew—
Came swift down to join
The rout early gather'd
In the town, round the temple,
Iacchus' white fane
On yonder hill

25

30

35

THE STRAYED REVELLER

Quick I pass'd, following 40
The wood-cutters' cart-track
Down the dark valley,—I saw
On my left, through the beeches,
Thy palace, Goddess,
Smokeless, empty! 45
Trembling, I enter'd, beheld
The court all silent,
The lions sleeping,
On the altar this bowl
I drank, Goddess! 50
And sank down here, sleeping,
On the steps of thy portico

Circe

Foolish boy! Why tremblest thou?
Thou lovest it, then, my wine?
Wouldst more of it? See, how glows, 55
Through the delicate, flush'd marble,
The red, creaming liquor,
Strown with dark seeds!
Drink, then! I chide thee not,
Deny thee not my bowl 60
Come, stretch forth thy hand, then—so!
Drink—drink again!

The Youth

Thanks, gracious one!
Ah, the sweet fumes again!
More soft, ah me, 65
More subtle-winding
Than Pan's flute-music!
Faint—faint! Ah me,
Again the sweet sleep!

51 1853-69 And sunk

THE STRAYED REVELLER

Circe

Hist! Thou—within there! 7c
Come forth, Ulysses!
Art tired with hunting?²
While we range the woodland,
See what the day brings

Ulysses

Ever new magic! 75
Hast thou then lured hither,
Wonderful Goddess, by thy art,
The young, languid-eyed Ampelus,
Iacchus' darling—
Or some youth beloved of Pan, 80
Of Pan and the Nymphs?²
That he sits, bending downward
His white, delicate neck
To the ivy-wreathed marge
Of thy cup, the bright, glancing vine-leaves 85
That crown his hair,
Falling forward, mingling
With the dark ivy-plants—
His fawn-skin, half untied,
Smear'd with red wine-stains² Who is he, 90
That he sits, overweigh'd
By fumes of wine and sleep,
So late, in thy portico?²
What youth, Goddess,—what guest
Of Gods or mortals?² 95

Circe

Hist! he wakes!
I lured him not hither, Ulysses
Nay, ask him!

THE STRAYED REVELLER

The Youth

Who speaks? Ah, who comes forth
To thy side, Goddess, from within? 100
How shall I name him?
This spare, dark-featured,
Quick-eyed stranger?
Ah, and I see too
His sailor's bonnet, 105
His short coat, travel-tarnish'd,
With one arm bare!—
Art thou not he, whom fame
This long time rumours
The favour'd guest of Circe, brought by the waves?
Art thou he, stranger? 111
The wise Ulysses,
Laertes' son?

Ulysses

I am Ulysses
And thou, too, sleeper? 115
Thy voice is sweet
It may be thou hast follow'd
Through the islands some divine bard,
By age taught many things,
Age and the Muses, 120
And heard him delighting
The chiefs and people
In the banquet, and learn'd his songs,
Of Gods and Heroes,
Of war and arts, 125
And peopled cities,
Inland, or built
By the grey sea —If so, then hail!
I honour and welcome thee

122 1877 and the people

THE STRAYED REVELLER

The Youth

The Gods are happy
They turn on all sides 130
Their shining eyes,
And see below them
The earth and men

They see Tiresias 135
Sitting, staff in hand,
On the warm, grassy
Asopus bank,
His robe drawn over
His old, sightless head, 140
Revolving inly
The doom of Thebes

They see the Centaurs
In the upper glens
Of Pelion, in the streams, 145
Where red-berried ashes fringe
The clear-brown shallow pools,
With streaming flanks, and heads
Rear'd proudly, snuffing
The mountain wind 150

They see the Indian
Drifting, knife in hand,
His frail boat moor'd to
A floating isle thick-matted
With large-leaved, low-creeping melon-plants, 155
And the dark cucumber
He reaps, and stows them,
Drifting—drifting,—round him,
Round his green harvest-plot,
Flow the cool lake-waves, 160
The mountains ring them

THE STRAYED REVELLER

They see the Scythian
 On the wide stepp, unharnessing
 His wheel'd house at noon
 He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal—
 Mares' milk, and bread 166
 Baked on the embers,—all around
 The boundless, waving grass-plains stretch, thick-starr'd
 With saffron and the yellow hollyhock
 And flag-leaved iris-flowers 170
 Sitting in his cart
 He makes his meal, before him, for long miles,
 Alive with bright green lizards,
 And the springing bustard-fowl,
 The track, a straight black line, 175
 Furrows the rich soil, here and there
 Clusters of lonely mounds
 Topp'd with rough-hewn,
 Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer
 The sunny waste 180

They see the ferry
 On the broad, clay-laden
 Lone Chorasman stream,—thereon,
 With snort and strain,
 Two horses, strongly swimming, tow 185
 The ferry-boat, with woven ropes
 To either bow
 Firm harness'd by the mane, a chief,
 With shout and shaken spear,
 Stands at the prow, and guides them, but astern
 The cowering merchants, in long robes, 191
 Sit pale beside their wealth
 Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,
 Of gold and ivory,
 Of turquoise-earth and amethyst, 195
 Jasper and chalcedony,

169 1869-77 holyhock

THE STRAYED REVELLER

And milk-barr'd onyx-stones
 The loaded boat swings groaning
 In the yellow eddies,
 The Gods behold them 200
 They see the Heroes
 Sitting in the dark ship
 On the foamless, long-heaving
 Violet sea,
 At sunset nearing 205
 The Happy Islands.
 These things, Ulysses,
 The wise bards also
 Behold and sing
 But oh, what labour! 210
 O prince, what pain!
 They too can see
 Tiresias,—but the Gods,
 Who give them vision,
 Added this law 215
 That they should bear too
 His groping blindness,
 His dark foreboding,
 His scorn'd white hairs,
 Bear Hera's anger 220
 Through a life lengthen'd
 To seven ages
 They see the Centaurs
 On Pelion,—then they feel,
 They too, the maddening wine 225
 Swell their large veins to bursting, in wild pain
 They feel the biting spears
 Of the grim Lapithæ, and Theseus, drive,
 Drive crashing through their bones, they feel
 High on a jutting rock in the red stream 230
 Alcmena's dreadful son

214 1869 gave them

THE STRAYED REVELLER

Ply his bow,—such a price
The Gods exact for song
To become what we sing.

They see the Indian 235
On his mountain lake, but squalls
Make their skiff reel, and worms
In the unkind spring have gnawn
Their melon-harvest to the heart —They see
The Scythian, but long frosts 240
Parch them in winter-time on the bare stepp,
Till they too fade like grass, they crawl
Like shadows forth in spring

They see the merchants 245
On the Oxus stream,—but care
Must visit first them too, and make them pale
Whether, through whirling sand,
A cloud of desert robber-horse have burst
Upon their caravan, or greedy kings,
In the wall'd cities the way passes through, 250
Crush'd them with tolls, or fever-airs,
On some great river's marge,
Mown them down, far from home.

They see the Heroes 255
Near harbour,—but they share
Their lives, and former violent toil in Thebes,
Seven-gated Thebes, or Troy;
Or where the echoing oars
Of Argo first
Startled the unknown sea 260

The old Silenus
Came, lolling in the sunshine,
From the dewy forest-coverts,
Thus way, at noon

238 1849 I' the unkind spring 238 1849-69 have gnaw'd
245 1849-69 Oxus' stream 248 1849-57 has burst

THE STRAYED REVELLER

- Sitting by me, while his Fauns
Down at the water-side
Sprinkled and smoothed
His drooping garland,
He told me these things
265
- But I, Ulysses,
Sitting on the warm steps,
Looking over the valley,
All day long, have seen,
Without pain, without labour,
Sometimes a wild-hair'd Mænad—
Sometimes a Faun with torches—
And sometimes, for a moment,
Passing through the dark stems
Flowing-robed, the beloved,
The desired, the divine,
Beloved Iacchus
275
280
- Ah, cool night-wind, tremulous stars!
Ah, glimmering water,
Fitful earth-murmur,
Dreaming woods!
Ah, golden-hair'd, strangely smiling Goddess,
And thou, proved, much enduring,
Wave-toss'd Wanderer!
Who can stand still?
Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me—
The cup again!
285
290
- Faster, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,
Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul!
295

FRAGMENT OF AN 'ANTIGONE'

[First published 1849 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

The Chorus

WELL hath he done who hath seized happiness!
For little do the all-containing hours,
 Though opulent, freely give
 Who, weighing that life well
 Fortune presents unpray'd, 5
Declines her ministry, and carves his own,
 And, justice not infringed,
Makes his own welfare his unswerved-from law

He does well too, who keeps that clue the mild
Birth-Goddess and the austere Fates first gave 10
 For from the day when these
 Bring him, a weeping child,
 First to the light, and mark
A country for him, kinsfolk, and a home,
 Unguided he remains, 15
Till the Fates come again, this time with death

 In little companies,
 And, our own place once left,
Ignorant where to stand, or whom to avoid,
By city and household group'd, we live, and many shocks 20
 Our order heaven-ordain'd
 Must every day endure
Voyages, exiles, hates, dissensions, wars
 Besides what waste *he* makes,
 The all-hated, order-breaking, ' 25
 Without friend, city, or home,
 Death, who dissevers all.

16 1849-69 alone, with death.

24 1849-55 waste He makes

FRAGMENT OF AN 'ANTIGONE'

Him then I praise, who dares
 To self-selected good
 Prefer obedience to the primal law,
 Which consecrates the ties of blood, for these, indeed, 30
 Are to the Gods a care,
 That touches but himself
 For every day man may be link'd and loosed
 With strangers, but the bond 35
 Original, deep-inwound,
 Of blood, can he not bind,
 Nor, if Fate binds, not bear
 But hush! Hæmon, whom Antigone,
 Robbing herself of life in burying,
 Against Creon's law, Polynices, 40
 Robs of a loved bride—pale, imploring,
 Waiting her passage,
 Forth from the palace hitherward comes.

Hæmon

No, no, old men, Creon I curse not! 45
 I weep, Thebans,
 One than Creon crueler far!
 For he, he, at least, by slaying her,
 Against laws doth mightily vindicate,
 But thou, too-bold, headstrong, pitiless! 50
 Ah me!—honourest more than thy lover,
 O Antigone!
 A dead, ignorant, thankless corpse

The Chorus

Nor was the love untrue
 Which the Dawn-Goddess bore 55
 To that fair youth she erst,
 Leaving the salt sea-beds
 And coming flush'd over the stormy frith
 Of loud Euripus, saw—
 Saw and snatch'd, wild with love, 60

FRAGMENT OF AN 'ANTIGONE'

From the pine-dotted spurs
Of Parnes, where thy waves,
Asopus' gleam rock-hemm'd—
The Hunter of the Tanagræan Field ¹⁴

But him, in his sweet prime,	65
By severance immature,	
By Artemis' soft shafts,	
She, though a Goddess born,	
Saw in the rocky isle of Delos die	
Such end o'ertook that love	70
For she desired to make	
Immortal mortal man,	
And blend his happy life,	
Far from the Gods, with hers,	
To him postponing an eternal law	75

Hæmon

But like me, she, wroth, complaining,
Succumb'd to the envy of unkind Gods,
And, her beautiful arms unclasping,
Her fair youth unwillingly gave

The Chorus

Nor, though enthroned too high	80
To fear assault of envious Gods,	
His beloved Argive seer would Zeus retain	
From his appointed end	

In this our Thebes, but when	
His flying steeds came near	85
To cross the steep Ismenian glen,	
The broad earth open'd, and whelm'd them and him,	
And through the void air sang	
At large his enemy's spear.	

FRAGMENT OF AN 'ANTIGONE'

And fain would Zeus have saved his tired son 90
 Beholding him where the Two Pillars stand
 O'er the sun-redden'd western straits,¹⁵
 Or at his work in that dim lower world
 Fain would he have recall'd
 The fraudulent oath which bound 95
 To a much feebl' wight the heroic man
 But he preferr'd Fate to his strong desire
 Nor did there need less than the burning pile
 Under the towering Trachis crags,
 And the Spercheios vale, shaken with groans, 100
 And the roused Maliac gulph,
 And scared Cætean snows,
 To achieve his son's deliverance, O my child!

FRAGMENT OF CHORUS OF A 'DEJANEIRA'

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

O FRIVOLOUS mind of man,
 Light ignorance, and hurrying, unsure thoughts!
 Though man bewails you not,
 How I bewail you!
 Little in your prosperity 5
 Do you seek counsel of the Gods
 Proud, ignorant, self-adored, you live alone
 In profound silence stern,
 Among their savage gorges and cold springs,
 Unvisited remain 10
 The great oracular shrines
 Thither in your adversity
 Do you betake yourselves for light,
 But strangely misinterpret all you hear
 For you will not put on 15
 New hearts with the enquirer's holy robe,
 And purged, considerate minds

FRAGMENT OF CHORUS OF A 'DEJANEIRA' 4 1867, 1868 *no italic*

FRAGMENT OF CHORUS OF A 'DEJANEIRA'

And him on whom, at the end
 Of toil and dolour untold,
 The Gods have said that repose 20
 At last shall descend undisturb'd—
 Him you expect to behold
 In an easy old age, in a happy home,
 No end but this you praise

 But him, on whom, in the prime 25
 Of life, with vigour undimm'd,
 With unspent mind, and a soul
 Unworn, undebased, undecay'd,
 Mournfully grating, the gates
 Of the city of death have for ever closed— 30
Hum, I count *him*, well-starr'd

EARLY DEATH AND FAME

[*First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter*]

For him who must see many years,
 I praise the life which slips away
 Out of the light and mutely, which avoids
 Fame, and her less fair followers, envy, strife,
 Stupid detraction, jealousy, cabal, 5
 Insincere praises, which descends
 The quiet mossy track to age.

But, when immature death
 Beckons too early the guest
 From the half-tried banquet of life, 10
 Young, in the bloom of his days,
 Leaves no leisure to press,
 Slow and surely, the sweets
 Of a tranquil life in the shade^a—

EARLY DEATH AND FAME. *First published in Fraser's Magazine, May 1855, as lines 121-36 of Haworth Churchyard, first printed separately in 1867*
 1 *Fraser 1855* must live 2 *Fraser 1855* That life is best which
 7 *Fraser 1855* The mossy quiet 13 *Fraser 1855* the sweet

EARLY DEATH AND FAME

Fuller for him be the hours! 15
 Give him emotion, though pain!
 Let him live, let him feel *I have lived*.
 Heap up his moments with life!
 Triple his pulses with fame!

PHILOMELA

[*First published 1853 Reprinted 1854, '57, '69, and thereafter*]

HARK! ah, the nightingale—
 The tawny-throated!
 Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
 What triumph! hark!—what pain!
 O wanderer from a Grecian shore, 5
 Still, after many years, in distant lands,
 Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
 That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
 Say, will it never heal?
 And can this fragrant lawn 10
 With its cool trees, and night,
 And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
 And moonshine, and the dew,
 To thy rack'd heart and brain
 Afford no balm? 15

17 *Fraser 1855 have liv'd* 19 *Fraser 1855 Quicken his pulses*

PHILOMELA 2 *MS* inken throated 3-13 *not in MS, instead*

Hast thou not yet, poor bird
 Been help'd by slipping years
 At least to half forgetfulness
 Of that old pain.
 Can change of scene, and night,
 And moonlight, & the dew,
 blanch'd song stirr'd
 And these frail acacia boughs
 light
 Thro whose frail leaves, & showers
 Of blossom'd clusters pale,
 by
 Thy voice in gushes comes,

14 *MS* torn heart *originally*

PHILOMELA

Dost thou to-night behold,
 Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
 The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?²
 Dost thou again peruse
 With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes 20
 The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?²
 Dost thou once more assay
 Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
 Poor fugitive, the feathery change
 Once more, and once more seem to make resound 25
 With love and hate, triumph and agony,
 Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?²
 Listen, Eugenia—
 How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
 Again—thou hearest?² 30
 Eternal passion!¹
 Eternal pain!

URANIA

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

I too have suffer'd, yet I know
 She is not cold, though she seems so
 She is not cold, she is not light,
 But our ignoble souls lack might

16 MS thou still behold 17 Not in MS 18 MS On this
 fair western lawn 19 MS still peruse Between 19 and 20, MS inserts

In the white acacia flowers

Between 21 and 22, MS inserts

Dost thou still reach

Thy husband, weak avenger, thro thyself²

28 MS Hark, hark, Eugenia! 30 MS over Again is inserted Once
 more

URANIA. Title 1852, 1855 Excuse.

1-4 The first stanza omitted,

1869 to 1881, in 1885 restored to original position.

1 MS alteration

1881 but [cancelled] I know

URANIA

She smiles and smiles, and will not sigh,
While we for hopeless passion die,
Yet she could love, those eyes declare,
Were but men nobler than they are 5

Eagerly once her gracious ken
Was turn'd upon the sons of men,
But light the serious visage grew— 10
She look'd, and smiled, and saw them through

Our petty souls, our strutting wits,
Our labour'd, puny passion-fits—
Ah, may she scorn them still, till we 15
Scorn them as bitterly as she!

Yet show her once, ye heavenly Powers,
One of some worthier race than ours!
One for whose sake she once might prove
How deeply she who scorns can love 20

His eyes be like the starry lights—
His voice like sounds of summer nights—
In all his lovely mien let pierce
The magic of the universe!

And she to him will reach her hand, 25
And gazing in his eyes will stand,
And know her friend, and weep for glee,
And cry *Long, long I've look'd for thee*

Then will she weep, with smiles, till then,
Coldly she mocks the sons of men 30
Till then, her lovely eyes maintain
Their pure, unwavering, deep disdain

17 1852, 1855 Yet oh, that Fate would let her see 18 1852 One
of some better race than we, 1855 One of some worthier race than we,
32 1852, 1855 gay, unwavering

EUPHROSYNE

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

I MUST not say that thou wast true,
Yet let me say that thou wast fair,
And they, that lovely face who view,
Why should they ask if truth be there?

Truth—what is truth? Two bleeding hearts,
Wounded by men, by fortune tried,
Outwearied with their lonely parts,
Vow to beat henceforth side by side

The world to them was stern and drear
 Their lot was but to weep and moan
 Ah, let them keep their faith sincere,
 For neither could subsist alone!

But souls whom some benignant breath
Hath charm'd at birth from gloom and care,
These ask no love, these plight no faith, 25
For they are happy as they are

The world to them may homage make,
And garlands for their forehead weave,
And what the world can give, they take—
But they bring more than they receive

They shine upon the world! Their ears
To one demand alone are coy,
They will not give us love and tears,
They bring us light and warmth and joy.

Title 1852, 1855 Indifference 1 1852-5 wert true, 1869
(only) I will not say 1877-81 that she was true, 2 1852-5
wert fair 1877-81 she was fair 4 1852-5 They will
not ask if truth be there. 1869-81 They should not ask if truth be
there. 14 1852-77 Has charm'd 21 1852-69 They smile

EUPHROSYNE

It was not love which heaved thy breast, 25
 Fair child!—it was the bliss within
 Adieu! and say that one, at least,
 Was just to what he did not win

CALAIS SANDS

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

A THOUSAND knights have lein'd their steeds
 To watch this line of sand-hills run,
 Along the never-silent Strait,
 To Calais glittering in the sun,

 To look tow'rd Ardres' Golden Field 5
 Across this wide aerial plain,
 Which glows as if the Middle Age
 Were gorgeous upon earth again

 Oh, that to share this famous scene,
 I saw, upon the open sand, 10
 Thy lovely presence at my side,
 Thy shawl, thy look, thy smile, thy hand!

25 1852-5 love that 25 From 1869 to 1881 the last stanza read

On one she smiled, and he was blest!
 She smiles elsewhere—we make a din!
 But 'twas not love which heaved her breast,
 Fair child!—it was the bliss within

CALAIS SANDS *Title MS* By the seaside near Calais August 1850.
 2 *MS* To see 3 *MS* never-silent beach 4 *MS* sparkling in
 the sun 5 *MS* To see 1867-81 toward Ardres' 6 *MS*
 Spread wide away the luminous plain, 9-12 *MS*

Oh wert thou here! That I might turn
 And see upon the lovely sand
 That slight sweet figure at my side—
 That shawl,—that step,—that look,—that hand!

CALAIS SANDS

How exquisite thy voice would come,
 My darling, on thus lonely air!
 How sweetly would the fresh sea-breeze
 Shake loose some band of soft brown hair! 15

Yet now my glance but once hath roved
 O'er Calais and its famous plain,
 To England's cliffs my gaze is turn'd,
 On the blue strait mine eyes I strain 20

Thou comest! Yes! the vessel's cloud
 Hangs dark upon the rolling sea
 Oh, that yon sea-bird's wings were mine,
 To win one instant's glimpse of thee!

I must not spring to grasp thy hand, 25
 To woo thy smile, to seek thine eye;
 But I may stand far off, and gaze,
 And watch thee pass unconscious by,

And spell thy looks, and guess thy thoughts,
 Mixt with the idlers on the pier — 30
 Ah, might I always rest unseen,
 So I might have thee always near!

To-morrow hurry through the fields
 Of Flanders to the storied Rhine!
 To-night those soft-fringed eyes shall close 35
 Beneath one roof, my queen! with mine

14 MS	quiet air!	15 MS	fresh sea-wind	16 MS	Shake back
thy bands	16 1867-9	some lock	17 MS	Not once to day	
these eyes have stay'd	17 1867-9	But now	18 MS	On Calais	
and its shining plain	19 MS	my look	20 MS	On the blue	
sea my gaze I strain	20 1867-81	O'er the blue strait	23 MS		
that sea-bird's	25 MS	to touch	26 MS	To catch thy smile	
28 MS see thee pass	29 MS	And watch thy air, and guess	31		
MS Oh might	34 MS	ancient Rhine	35 MS	soft-veiled eyes	

FADED LEAVES

I THE RIVER

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

STILL glides the stream, slow drops the boat
Under the rustling poplars' shade,
Silent the swans beside us float—
None speaks, none heeds, ah, turn thy head!

Let those arch eyes now softly shine, 5
That mocking mouth grow sweetly bland,
Ah, let them rest, those eyes, on mine!
On mine let rest that lovely hand!

My pent-up tears oppress my brain,
My heart is swoln with love unsaid 10
Ah, let me weep, and tell my pain,
And on thy shoulder rest my head!

Before I die—before the soul,
Which now is mine, must re-attain
Immunity from my control, 15
And wander round the world again,

Before this teased o'erlabour'd heart
For ever leaves its vain employ,
Dead to its deep habitual smart,
And dead to hopes of future joy 20

2 TOO LATE

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

EACH on his own strict line we move,
And some find death ere they find love,
So far apart their lives are thrown
From the twin soul which halves their own

FADED LEAVES 1 *The River* Title 1852 *The River* Made first poem
in *Faded Leaves* group in 1855

2 *Too Late* Title 1852 *Too Late* Made second poem in *Faded Leaves*
group in 1855 4 MS, 1852-81 that halves

FADED LEAVES

And sometimes, by still harder fate, 5
The lovers meet, but meet too late
—Thy heart is mine!—*True, true! ah, true!*
—Then, love, thy hand!—*Ah no! adieu!*

3 SEPARATION

[*First published 1855 Reprinted 1869 and thereafter*]

STOP!—not to me, at this bitter departing,
Speak of the sure consolations of time!
Fresh be the wound, still-renew'd be its smarting,
So but thy image endure in its prime
But, if the steadfast commandment of Nature 5
Wills that remembrance should always decay—
If the loved form and the deep-cherish'd feature
Must, when unseen, from the soul fade away—
Me let no half-effaced memories cumber!
Fled, fled at once, be all vestige of thee! 10
Deep be the darkness and still be the slumber—
Dead be the past and its phantoms to me!
Then, when we meet, and thy look strays toward me,
Scanning my face and the changes wrought there
Who, let me say, is this stranger regards me, 15
With the grey eyes, and the lovely brown hair?

4 ON THE RHINE

[*First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter*]

VAIN is the effort to forget
Some day I shall be cold, I know,
As is the eternal moonlit snow
Of the high Alps, to which I go—
But ah, not yet, not yet! 5

3 Separation 13 1855-69 towards

4. On the Rhine Title 1852 On the Rhine Made fourth poem in Faded Leaves group in 1855

FADED LEAVES

Vain is the agony of grief
 'Tis true, indeed, an iron knot
 Ties straitly up from mine thy lot,
 And were it snapt—thou lov'st me not!
 But is despair relief? 10

Awhile let me with thought have done
 And as this brimm'd unwrinkled Rhine,
 And that far purple mountain-line,
 Lie sweetly in the look divine
 Of the slow-sinking sun, 15

So let me lie, and, calm as they,
 Let beam upon my inward view
 Those eyes of deep, soft, lucent hue—
 Eyes too expressive to be blue,
 Too lovely to be grey. 20

Ah, Quiet, all things feel thy balm!
 Those blue hills too, this river's flow,
 Were restless once, but long ago
 Tamed is their turbulent youthful glow,
 Their joy is in their calm 25

5 LONGING

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

COME to me in my dreams, and then
 By day I shall be well again!
 For then the night will more than pay
 The hopeless longing of the day

Come, as thou cam'st a thousand times, 5
 A messenger from radiant climes,
 And smile on thy new world, and be
 As kind to others as to me!

5 *Longing* Title 1852 *Longing* Made fifth poem in *Faded Leaves group*
 in 1855 3, 15 1869 For so the night 8 1852 to all the rest
 as me

FADED LEAVES

Or, as thou never cam'st in sooth,
Come now, and let me dream it truth, 10
And part my hair, and kiss my brow,
And say *My love! why sufferest thou?*

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For then the night will more than pay 15
The hopeless longing of the day

DESPONDENCY

[*First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter*]

THE thoughts that rain their steady glow
Like stars on life's cold sea,
Which others know, or say they know—
They never shone for me

Thoughts light, like gleams, my spirit's sky, 5
But they will not remain
They light me once, they hurry by,
And never come again.

SELF-DECEPTION

[*First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter*]

SAY, what blinds us, that we claim the glory
Of possessing powers not our share?
—Since man woke on earth, he knows his story,
But, before we woke on earth, we were

Long, long since, undower'd yet, our spirit 5
Roam'd, ere birth, the treasures of God,
Saw the gifts, the powers it might inherit,
Ask'd an outfit for its earthly road

10 *MS* deem it

12. *MS* My friend,

SELF-DECEPTION

Then, as now, this tremulous, eager being
Strain'd and long'd and grasp'd each gift it saw, 10
Then, as now, a Power beyond our seeing
Staved us back, and gave our choice the law

Ah, whose hand that day through Heaven guided
Man's new spirit, since it was not we?
Ah, who sway'd our choice, and who decided 15
What our gifts, and what our wants should be?

For, alas! he left us each retaining
Shreds of gifts which he refused in full
Still these waste us with their hopeless straining,
Still the attempt to use them proves them null 20

And on earth we wander, groping, reeling,
Powers stir in us, stir and disappear
Ah! and he, who placed our master-feeling,
Fail'd to place that master-feeling clear

We but dream we have our wish'd-for powers, 25
Ends we seek we never shall attain
Ah! *some* power exists there, which is ours?
Some end is there, we indeed may gain?

DOVER BEACH

[*First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter*]

THE sea is calm to-night
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits,—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone, the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay 5
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!

SELF-DECEPTION 14 1855 blank spirit 16 1852 What the parts,
and what the whole should be? 24 1855 our master-feeling

DOVER BEACH 4 MS Shines & is gone the cliffs of England
6 MS hush'd is wish sweet is as *alternativa*.

DOVER BEACH

Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, 10
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in

Sophocles long ago 15
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery, we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea 20

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, 25
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems 30
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

8 1867-77 Where the ebb meets the moon-blanch'd sand, 1878-81
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd sand, 1880 Where the sea
meets the moon-blanch'd land, (as in present reading) 10 MS 1867
suck back 11 MS steep strand with barr'd strand as alternative
12 MS Cease and begin 13 MS regular cadence with mournful
cadence as alternative 17 MS troubled ebb with turbid ebb as alterna-
tive 21-8 Written at side of MS 23 MS garment furled
with girdle furled as alternative 24 MS we only with I only as
alternative, 28 MS And naked shingles of the world. Ah love &c

DOVER BEACH

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain,
And we are here as on a darkling plain 35
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

GROWING OLD

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

WHAT is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The lustre of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forego her wreath?
—Yes, but not this alone 5

Is it to feel our strength—
Not our bloom only, but our strength—decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung? 10

Yes, this, and more, but not
Ah, 'tis not what in youth we dream'd 'twould be!
'Tis not to have our life
Mellow'd and soften'd as with sunset-glow,
A golden day's decline 15

'Tis not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirr'd,
And weep, and feel the fulness of the past,
The years that are no more 20

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young,
It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain 25

36 1869, 1877 and fight [sic]
GROWING OLD 10 1867-77 weakly strung?

GROWING OLD

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion—none 30

It is—last stage of all—
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost
Which blamed the living man 35

THE PROGRESS OF POESY

A VARIATION

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

YOUTH rambles on life's arid mount,
And strikes the rock, and finds the vein,
And brings the water from the fount,
The fount which shall not flow again

The man mature with labour chops 5
For the bright stream a channel grand,
And sees not that the sacred drops
Ran off and vanish'd out of hand

And then the old man totters nigh,
And feebly rakes among the stones 10
The mount is mute, the channel dry,
And down he lays his weary bones

NEW ROME

LINES WRITTEN FOR MISS STORY'S ALBUM

[First published in the CORNHILL MAGAZINE, June 1873 Reprinted
1881 and thereafter]

THE armless Vatican Cupid
Hangs down his beautiful head,
For the priests have got him in prison,
And Psyche long has been dead

But see, his shaven oppressors
Begin to quake and disband!
And *The Times*, that bright Apollo,
Proclaims salvation at hand

'And what,' cries Cupid, 'will save us?'
Says Apollo '*Modernise Rome*'
What inns! Your streets, too, how narrow!
Too much of palace and dome!

'O learn of London, whose paupers
Are not pushed out by the swells!
Wide streets with fine double trottoirs,
And then—the London hotels!

The armless Vatican Cupid
Hangs down his head as before
Through centuries past it has hung so,
And will through centuries more

5 MS black-coated gaolers with shaven oppressors as alternative

8 MS Proclaims with Instills as alternative

is coming? with will save us? as alternative

with 'd' cancelled

and narrow—

9 MS asks Cupid,

10 MS Modernised

11 MS

Your streets [are cancelled] how ancient

13-14 MS

Become like glorious London,

Where poor have place like the swells,

with, as alternative

Be made like London, where paupers

Are not pushed out by the swells,

15 MS New streets with Wide streets as alternative

the centuries past with Through written at side

19 MS All

20 MS for centuries

PIS-ALLER

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

'MAN is blind because of sin,
Revelation makes him sure,
Without that, who looks within,
Looks in vain, for all's obscure'

Nay, look closer into man! 5
Tell me, can you find indeed
Nothing sure, no moral plan
Clear prescribed, without your creed?

'No, I nothing can perceive!
Without that, all's dark for men 10
That, or nothing, I believe'—
For God's sake, believe it then!

THE LAST WORD

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

CREEP into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said!
Vain thy onset! all stands fast
Thou thyself must break at last

Let the long contention cease! 5
Geese are swans, and swans are geese
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired, best be still

They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee? 10
Better men fared thus before thee,
Fired their ringing shot and pass'd,
Hotly charged—and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall, 15
Find thy body by the wall!

THE LAST WORD 12 1867-9 and broke

THE LORD'S MESSENGERS

[First published in the CORNHILL MAGAZINE, July 1860 Reprinted
1881 and thereafter]

THUS saith the Lord to his own —
‘See ye the trouble below’
Warfare of man from his birth!
Too long let we them groan,
Haste, arise ye, and go,
Carry my peace upon earth!’

5

Gladly they rise at his call,
Gladly obey his command,
Gladly descend to the plain
—Ah! How few of them all,
Those willing servants, shall stand
In the Master’s presence again!

10

Some in the tumult are lost,
Baffled, bewilder’d, they stray
Some, as prisoners, draw breath;
Some, unconquer’d, are cross’d
(Not yet half through the day)
By a pitiless arrow of Death

15

Title Cornhill Magazine, July 1860 Men of Genius In 1860 the poem
opened as follows

Silent, the Lord of the world
Eyes from the heavenly height,
Girt by his far-shining train,
Us, who with banners unfurl’d
Fight life’s many-chanc’d fight
Madly below, in the plan

1 1860 Then saith 2 1860 the battle 3 1860 Turmoil of
death and of birth! 8 1860 Gladly they take 10 1860 Alas! How
few 12 1860 their Master’s 16-18 1860

Others—the bravest—are cross’d,
On the height of their bold-follow’d way,
By the swift-rushing missile of Death

THE LORD'S MESSENGERS

Hardly, hardly shall one
Come, with countenance bright, 20
At the close of day, from the plain,
His Master's errand well done,
Safe through the smoke of the fight,
Back to his Master again

A NAMELESS EPITAPH

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

Ask not my name, O friend!
That Being only, which hath known each man
From the beginning, can
Remember each unto the end.

BACCHANALIA,

OR,

THE NEW AGE

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

I

THE evening comes, the fields are still
The tinkle of the thirsty rill,
Unheard all day, ascends again,
Deserted is the half-mown plain,
Silent the swaths! the ringing wain, 5

21 1860 O'er the cloud-wrapt, perilous plain

A NAMELESS EPITAPH In 1867 and 1868 the title A Nameless Epitaph was
applied to these lines, discarded in 1869

This sentence have I left behind
An aching body, and a mind
Not wholly clear, nor wholly blind,
Too keen to rest, too weak to find,
That travails sore, and brings forth wind,
Are God's worst portion to mankind

1-4 1867, 1868 followed the six lines above, entitled Another

BACCHANALIA, OR, THE NEW AGE. 1 1867-9 field is still 4 1867
the new-reap'd grain, 5 1867 Silent the sheaves!

BACCHANALIA, OR, THE NEW AGE

The mower's cry, the dog's alarms,
 All housed within the sleeping farms!
 The business of the day is done,
 The last-left haymaker is gone
 And from the thyme upon the height, 10
 And from the elder-blossom white
 And pale dog-roses in the hedge,
 And from the mint-plant in the sedge,
 In puffs of balm the night-air blows
 The perfume which the day forgoes 15
 And on the pure horizon far,
 See, pulsing with the first-born star,
 The liquid sky above the hill!
 The evening comes, the fields are still
 Loitering and leaping, 20
 With saunter, with bounds—
 Flickering and circling
 In files and in rounds—
 Gaily their pine-staff green
 Tossing in air, 25
 Loose o'er their shoulders white
 Showering their hair—
 See! the wild Mænads
 Break from the wood,
 Youth and Iacchus 30
 Maddening their blood
 See! through the quiet land
 Rioting they pass—
 Fling the fresh heaps about,
 Trample the grass 35
 Tear from the rifled hedge
 Garlands, their prize,
 Fill with their sports the field,
 Fill with their cries

6 1867 The reaper's cry, the dogs' alarms,
 gleaner gone. 19 1867-9 field is still.
 34 1867 piled sheaves about,

9 1867 The last belated
 32 1867 quiet corn

BACCHANALIA, OR, THE NEW AGE

Shepherd, what ails thee, then? 40
 Shepherd, why mute?
 Forth with thy joyous song!
 Forth with thy flute!
 Tempts not the revel blithe?
 Lure not their cries? 45
 Glow not their shoulders smooth?
 Melt not their eyes?
 Is not, on cheeks like those,
 Lovely the flush?
 —*Ah, so the quiet was!* 50
So was the hush!

II

The epoch ends, the world is still
 The age has talk'd and work'd its fill—
 The famous orators have shone,
 The famous poets sung and gone,
 The famous men of war have fought, 5
 The famous speculators thought,
 The famous players, sculptors, wrought,
 The famous painters fill'd their wall,
 The famous critics judged it all
 The combatants are parted now— 10
 Uphung the spear, unbent the bow,
 The puissant crown'd, the weak laid low
 And in the after-silence sweet,
 Now strifes are hush'd, our ears doth meet,
 Ascending pure, the bell-like fame 15
 Of this or that down-trodden name,
 Delicate spirits, push'd away
 In the hot press of the noon-day
 And o'er the plain, where the dead age
 Did its now silent warfare wage— 20

BACCHANALIA, OR, THE NEW AGE

O'er that wide plain, now wrapt in gloom,
 Where many a splendour finds its tomb,
 Many spent fames and fallen might—
 The one or two immortal lights
 Rise slowly up into the sky 25
 To shine there everlastingly,
 Like stars over the bounding hill
 The epoch ends, the world is still

Thundering and bursting
 In torrents, in waves— 30
 Carolling and shouting
 Over tombs, amid graves—
 See! on the cumber'd plain
 Clearing a stage,
 Scattering the past about, 35
 Comes the new age
 Bards make new poems,
 Thinkers new schools,
 Statesmen new systems,
 Critics new rules 40
 All things begin again,
 Life is their prize,
 Earth with their deeds they fill,
 Fill with their cries

Poet, what ails thee, then? 45
 Say, why so mute?
 Forth with thy praising voice!
 Forth with thy flute!
 Loiterer! why sittest thou
 Sunk in thy dream? 50
 Tempts not the bright new age?
 Shines not its stream?
 Look, ah, what genius,
 Art, science, wit!
 Soldiers like Cæsar, 55
 Statesmen like Pitt!

BACCHANALIA, OR, THE NEW AGE

Sculptors like Phidias,
Raphaels in shoals,
Poets like Shakespeare—
Beautiful souls! 60
See, on their glowing cheeks
Heavenly the flush!
—*Ah, so the silence was!*
So was the hush!

The world but feels the present's spell, 65
The poet feels the past as well,
Whatever men have done, might do,
Whatever thought, might think it too

EPILOGUE

TO LESSING'S LAOCOON

[*First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter*]

ONE morn as through Hyde Park we walk'd,
My friend and I, by chance we talk'd
Of Lessing's famed Laocoon,
And after we awhile had gone
In Lessing's track, and tried to see 5
What painting is, what poetry—
Diverging to another thought,
'Ah,' cries my friend, 'but who hath taught
Why music and the other arts
Oftener perform aright their parts 10
Than poetry? why she, than they,
Fewer fine successes can display?'

'For 'tis so, surely! Even in Greece,
Where best the poet framed his piece,
Even in that Phœbus-guarded ground 15
Pausanias on his travels found
Good poems, if he look'd, more rare
(Though many) than good statues were—

EPILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOON 12 1867 Fewer real successes

EPILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOÖN

For these, in truth, were everywhere
 Of bards full many a stroke divine 20
 In Dante's, Petrarch's, Tasso's line,
 The land of Ariosto show'd,
 And yet, e'en there, the canvas glow'd
 With triumphs, a yet ampler brood,
 Of Raphael and his brotherhood 25
 And nobly perfect, in our day
 Of haste, half-work, and disarray,
 Profound yet touching, sweet yet strong,
 Hath risen Goethe's, Wordsworth's song,
 Yet even I (and none will bow 30
 Deeper to these) must needs allow,
 They yield us not, to soothe our pains,
 Such multitude of heavenly strains
 As from the kings of sound are blown,
 Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn ' 35

 While thus my friend discoursed, we pass
 Out of the path, and take the grass
 The grass had still the green of May,
 And still the unblacken'd elms were gay,
 The kine were resting in the shade, 40
 The flies a summer-murmur made
 Bright was the morn and south the air,
 The soft-couch'd cattle were as fair
 As those which pastured by the sea,
 That old-world morn, in Sicily, 45
 When on the beach the Cyclops lay,
 And Galatea from the bay
 Mock'd her poor lovelorn giant's lay
 'Behold,' I said, 'the painter's sphere!
 The limits of his art appear 50
 The passing group, the summer-morn,
 The grass, the elms, that blossom'd thorn—
 Those cattle couch'd, or, as they rise,

EPILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOON

Their shining flanks, their liquid eyes—
 These, or much greater things, but caught 55
 Like these, and in one aspect brought!
 In outward semblance he must give
 A moment's life of things that live,
 Then let him choose his moment well,
 With power divine its story tell ' 60

Still we walk'd on, in thoughtful mood,
 And now upon the bridge we stood
 Full of sweet breathings was the air,
 Of sudden stirs and pauses fair
 Down o'er the stately bridge the breeze 65
 Came rustling from the garden-trees
 And on the sparkling waters play'd,
 Light-plashing waves an answer made,
 And mimic boats their haven near'd
 Beyond, the Abbey-towers appear'd, 70
 By mist and chimneys unconfined,
 Free to the sweep of light and wind,
 While through their earth-moor'd nave below
 Another breath of wind doth blow,
 Sound as of wandering breeze—but sound 75
 In laws by human artists bound
 'The world of music!' I exclaim'd —
 'This breeze that rustles by, that famed
 Abbey recall it! what a sphere
 Large and profound, hath genius here! 80
 The inspired musician what a range,
 What power of passion, wealth of change!
 Some source of feeling he must choose
 And its lock'd fount of beauty use,
 And through the stream of music tell 85
 Its else unutterable spell,
 To choose it rightly is his part,

73 1867 the earth-moor'd
 pulse of feeling

81 1867 Th' inspired

83 1867

EPILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOÖN

And press into its inmost heart

'Miserere, Domine !

The words are utter'd, and they flee. 90

Deep is their penitential moan,

Mighty their pathos, but 'tis gone

They have declared the spirit's sore

Sore load, and words can do no more

Beethoven takes them then—those two 95

Poor, bounded words—and makes them new;

Infinite makes them, makes them young,

Transplants them to another tongue,

Where they can now, without constraint,

Pour all the soul of their complaint, 100

And roll adown a channel large

The wealth divine they have in charge

Page after page of music turn,

And still they live and still they burn,

Eternal, passion-fraught, and free— 105

Miserere, Domine !

Onward we moved, and reach'd the Rude

Where gaily flows the human tide

Afar, in rest the cattle lay,

We heard, afar, faint music play, 110

But agitated, brisk, and near,

Men, with their stream of life, were here

Some hang upon the rails, and some

On foot behind them go and come

Thus through the Rude upon his steed 115

Goes slowly by, and thus at speed

The young, the happy, and the fair,

The old, the sad, the worn, were there,

Some vacant, and some musing went,

And some in talk and merriment 120

Nods, smiles, and greetings, and farewells!

And now and then, perhaps, there swells

105 1869-77 Perennial, passion-fraught,

PILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOÖN

A sigh, a tear—but in the throng
 All changes fast, and hies along
 Hies, ah, from whence, what native ground? 125
 And to what goal, what ending, bound?
 'Behold, at last the poet's sphere!
 But who,' I said, 'suffices here?'

'For, ah! so much he has to do,
 Be painter and musician too! 130
 The aspect of the moment show,
 The feeling of the moment know!
 The aspect not, I grant, express
 Clear as the painter's art can dress,
 The feeling not, I grant, explore 135
 So deep as the musician's lore—
 But clear as words can make revealing,
 And deep as words can follow feeling
 But, ah! then comes his sorest spell
 Of toil—he must life's *movement* tell! 140
 The thread which binds it all in one,
 And not its separate parts alone
 The *movement* he must tell of life,
 Its pain and pleasure, rest and strife,
 His eye must travel down, at full, 145
 The long, unpausing spectacle,
 With faithful unrelaxing force
 Attend it from its primal source,
 From change to change and year to year
 Attend it of its mid career, 150
 Attend it to the last repose
 And solemn silence of its close

'The cattle rising from the grass
 His thought must follow where they pass,
 The penitent with anguish bow'd 155
 His thought must follow through the crowd.

EPILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOÖN

Yes! all this eddying, motley throng
 That sparkles in the sun along,
 Girl, statesman, merchant, soldier bold,
 Master and servant, young and old, 160
 Grave, gay, child, parent, husband, wife,
 He follows home, and lives their life

'And many, many are the souls
 Life's movement fascinates, controls,
 It draws them on, they cannot save 165
 Their feet from its alluring wave,
 They cannot leave it, they must go
 With its unconquerable flow

But ah! how few, of all that try
 This mighty march, do aught but die! 170
 For ill-endow'd for such a way,
 Ill-stored in strength, in wits, are they
 They faint, they stagger to and fro,
 And wandering from the stream they go,
 In pain, in terror, in distress, 175
 They see, all round, a wilderness.

Sometimes a momentary gleam
 They catch of the mysterious stream,
 Sometimes, a second's space, their ear
 The murmur of its waves doth hear 180
 That transient glimpse in song they say,
 But not as painter can pourtray—
 That transient sound in song they tell,
 But not, as the musician, well.
 And when at last their snatches cease, 185
 And they are silent and at peace,
 The stream of life's majestic whole
 Hath ne'er been mirror'd on their soul.

'Only a few the life-stream's shore
 With safe unwandering feet explore, 190

171 1867 For ill prepared
 185 1867 these snatches

172 1867 Ill found in strength,

EPILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOÖN

Untired its movement bright attend,	
Follow its windings to the end	
Then from its brimming waves their eye	
Drinks up delighted ecstasy,	
And its deep-toned, melodious voice	195
For ever makes their ear rejoice	
They speak! the happiness divine	
They feel, runs o'er in every line,	
Its spell is round them like a shower—	
It gives them pathos, gives them power	200
No painter yet hath such a way,	
Nor no musician made, as they,	
And gather'd on immortal knolls	
Such lovely flowers for cheering souls	
Beethoven, Raphael, cannot reach	205
The charm which Homer, Shakespeare, teach	
To these, to these, their thankful race	
Gives, then, the first, the fairest place,	
And brightest is their glory's sheen,	
For greatest hath their labour been '	210

PERSISTENCY OF POETRY

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

THOUGH the Muse be gone away,
 Though she move not earth to-day,
 Souls, erewhile who caught her word,
 Ah! still harp on what they heard

210 1867-9 has their labour

PERSISTENCY OF POETRY *This stanza, without tute, was prefatory to the*
volumes of 1867-69 2 MS *she rôle with move as alternative*

A CAUTION TO POETS

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

WHAT poets feel not, when they make,
A pleasure in creating,
The world, in *its* turn, will not take
Pleasure in contemplating

THE YOUTH OF NATURE

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

RAISED are the dripping oars,
Silent the boat! the lake,
Lovely and soft as a dream,
Swims in the sheen of the moon.
The mountains stand at its head 5
Clear in the pure June-night,
But the valleys are flooded with haze
Rydal and Fairfield are there,
In the shadow Wordsworth lies dead.
So it is, so it will be for aye 10
Nature is fresh as of old,
Is lovely, a mortal is dead

The spots which recall him survive,
For he lent a new life to these hills
The Pillar still broods o'er the fields 15
Which border Ennerdale Lake,
And Egremont sleeps by the sea
The gleam of The Evening Star
Twinkles on Grasmere no more,
But ruin'd and solemn and grey 20
The sheepfold of Michael survives,
And, far to the south, the heath

A CAUTION TO POETS. *This stanza, without title, was prefatory to the volume of 1869 only, otherwise printed regularly with title*
THE YOUTH OF NATURE. 16 1852 That border

THE YOUTH OF NATURE

Still blows in the Quantock coombs,
By the favourite waters of Ruth
These survive!—yet not without pain, 25
Pain and dejection to-night,
Can I feel that their poet is gone

He grew old in an age he condemn'd
He look'd on the rushing decay
Of the times which had shelter'd his youth; 30
Felt the dissolving throes
Of a social order he loved,
Outlived his brethren, his peers,
And, like the Theban seer,
Died in his enemies' day 35

Cold bubbled the spring of Tilphusa,
Copaïs lay bright in the moon,
Helicon glass'd in the lake
Its firs, and afar rose the peaks
Of Parnassus, snowily clear, 40
Thebes was behind him in flames,
And the clang of arms in his ear,
When his awe-struck captors led
The Theban seer to the spring
Tiresias drank and died 45
Nor did reviving Thebes
See such a prophet again

Well may we mourn, when the head
Of a sacred poet lies low
In an age which can rear them no more! 50
The complaining millions of men
Darken in labour and pain,
But he was a priest to us all
Of the wonder and bloom of the world,
Which we saw with his eyes, and were glad 55
He is dead, and the fruit-bearing day
Of his race is past on the earth,
And darkness returns to our eyes

THE YOUTH OF NATURE

For, oh! is it you, is it you,
 Moonlight, and shadow, and lake, 60
 And mountains, that fill us with joy,
 Or the poet who sings you so well?
 Is it you, O beauty, O grace,
 O charm, O romance, that we feel,
 Or the voice which reveals what you are? 65
 Are ye, like daylight and sun,
 Shared and rejoiced in by all?
 Or are ye immersed in the mass
 Of matter, and hard to extract,
 Or sunk at the core of the world 70
 Too deep for the most to discern?
 Like stars in the deep of the sky,
 Which arise on the glass of the sage,
 But are lost when their watcher is gone

 'They are here'—I heard, as men heard 75
 In Mysian Ida the voice
 Of the Mighty Mother, or Crete,
 The murmur of Nature reply—
 'Loveliness, magic, and grace,
 They are here! they are set in the world, 80
 They abide, and the finest of souls
 Hath not been thrill'd by them all,
 Nor the dullest been dead to them quite.
 The poet who sings them may die,
 But they are immortal and live, 85
 For they are the life of the world
 Will ye not learn it, and know,
 When ye mourn that a poet is dead,
 That the singer was less than his themes,
 Life, and emotion, and I? 90

 'More than the singer are these
 Weak is the tremor of pain

THE YOUTH OF NATURE

That thrills in his mournfullest chord
 To that which once ran through his soul
 Cold the elation of joy 95
 In his gladdest, airiest song,
 To that which of old in his youth
 Fill'd him and made him divine
 Hardly his voice at its best
 Gives us a sense of the awe, 100
 The vastness, the grandeur, the gloom
 Of the unlit gulph of himself

'Ye know not yourselves, and your bards—
 The clearest, the best, who have read
 Most in themselves—have beheld 105
 Less than they left unreveal'd
 Ye express not yourselves,—can you make
 With marble, with colour, with word,
 What charm'd you in others re-live?
 Can thy pencil, O artist! restore 110
 The figure, the bloom of thy love,
 As she was in her morning of spring?
 Canst thou paint the ineffable smile
 Of her eyes as they rested on thine?
 Can the image of life have the glow, 115
 The motion of life itself?

'Yourselves and your fellows ye know not, and me,
 The mateless, the one, will ye know?
 Will ye scan me, and read me, and tell
 Of the thoughts that ferment in my breast, 120
 My longing, my sadness, my joy?
 Will ye claim for your great ones the gift
 To have render'd the gleam of my skies,
 To have echoed the moan of my seas,
 Utter'd the voice of my hills? 125
 When your great ones depart, will ye say

THE YOUTH OF NATURE

*All things have suffer'd a loss,
Nature is hid in their grave?*

'Race after race, man after man,
Have thought that my secret was theirs, 130
Have dream'd that I lived but for them,
That they were my glory and joy
—They are dust, they are changed, they are gone!
I remain '

THE YOUTH OF MAN

[*First published 1852 Two fragments, entitled 'Richmond Hill' and 'Power of Youth', 1853 Reprinted, in complete form, 1855, '69, and thereafter*]

WE, O Nature, depart,
Thou survivest us! this,
Thus, I know, is the law
Yes! but more than this,
Thou who seest us die 5
Seest us change while we live,
Seest our dreams, one by one,
Seest our errors depart,
Watchest us, Nature! throughout,
Mild and inscrutably calm 10

Well for us that we change!
Well for us that the power
Which in our morning-prime
Saw the mistakes of our youth,
Sweet, and forgiving, and good, 15
Sees the contrition of age!

Behold, O Nature, this pair!
See them to-night where they stand,
Not with the halo of youth
Crowning their brows with its light, 20

130 1852, 1855 dream'd that my secret
that I lived

131 1852, 1855 thought

THE YOUTH OF MAN

Not with the sunshine of hope,
 Not with the rapture of spring,
 Which they had of old, when they stood
 Years ago at my side
 In this self-same garden, and said 25
 'We are young, and the world is ours,
 Man, man is the king of the world!¹
 Fools that these mystics are
 Who prate of Nature! for she
 Hath neither beauty, nor warmth, 30
 Nor life, nor emotion, nor power.
 But man has a thousand gifts,
 And the generous dreamer invests
 The senseless world with them all.
 Nature is nothing, her charm 35
 Lives in our eyes which can paint,
 Lives in our hearts which can feel'

Thou, O Nature, wast mute,
 Mute as of old! days flew,
 Days and years, and Time 40
 With the ceaseless stroke of his wings
 Brush'd off the bloom from their soul
 Clouded and dim grew their eye,
 Languid their heart—for youth
 Quicken'd its pulses no more 45
 Slowly, within the walls
 Of an ever-narrowing world,
 They droop'd, they grew blind, they grew old
 Thee and their youth in thee,
 Nature! they saw no more 50

Murmur of living,
 Stir of existence,
 Soul of the world!

27 1852-69 For man is 29 1852-81 but she 30 1852,
 1855 Has neither 38 1852, 1855 wert mute, 51-60 1853
 printed separately as Richmond Hill

THE YOUTH OF MAN

Make, oh, make yourselves felt
 To the dying spirit of youth! 55
 Come, like the breath of the spring!
 Leave not a human soul
 To grow old in darkness and pain!
 Only the living can feel you,
 But leave us not while we live! 60

Here they stand to-night—
 Here, where this grey balustrade
 Crowns the still valley, behind
 Is the castled house, with its woods,
 Which shelter'd their childhood—the sun 65
 On its ivied windows, a scent
 From the grey-wall'd gardens, a breath
 Of the fragrant stock and the pink,
 Perfumes the evening air
 Their children play on the lawns 70
 They stand and listen, they hear
 The children's shouts, and at times,
 Faintly, the bark of a dog
 From a distant farm in the hills
 Nothing besides! in front 75
 The wide, wide valley outspreads
 To the dim horizon, reposed
 In the twilight, and bathed in dew,
 Corn-field and hamlet and copse
 Darkening fast, but a light, 80
 Far off, a glory of day,
 Still plays on the city spires,
 And there in the dusk by the walls,
 With the grey mist marking its course
 Through the, silent, flowery land, 85
 On, to the plains, to the sea,
 Floats the imperial stream

THE YOUTH OF MAN

Well I know what they feel!
They gaze, and the evening wind
Plays on their faces, they gaze— 90
Airs from the Eden of youth
Awake and stir in their soul,
The past returns—they feel
What they are, alas! what they were.
They, not Nature, are changed 95
Well I know what they feel!

Hush, for tears
Begin to steal to their eyes!
Hush, for fruit
Grows from such sorrow as theirs! 100

And they remember,
With piercing, untold anguish,
The proud boasting of their youth
And they feel how Nature was fair
And the mists of delusion, 105
And the scales of habit,
Fall away from their eyes,
And they see, for a moment,
Stretching out, like the desert
In its weary, unprofitable length, 110
Their faded, ignoble lives

While the locks are yet brown on thy head,
While the soul still looks through thine eyes,
While the heart still pours
The mantling blood to thy cheek, 115
Sink, O youth, in thy soul!
Yearn to the greatness of Nature,
Rally the good in the depths of thyself!

112-18 1853 printed separately as *Power of Youth*.

PALLADIUM

[*First published 1867 Reprinted 1869 and thereafter*]

Set where the upper streams of Simois flow
Was the Palladium, high 'mid rock and wood,
And Hector was in Ilium, far below,
And fought, and saw it not—but there it stood!

It stood, and sun and moonshine rain'd their light 5
On the pure columns of its glen-built hall
Backward and forward roll'd the waves of fight
Round Troy—but while this stood, Troy could not fall

So, in its lovely moonlight, lives the soul
Mountains surround it, and sweet virgin air, 10
Cold plashing, past it, crystal waters roll,
We visit it by moments, ah, too rare!

We shall renew the battle in the plain
To-morrow,—red with blood will Xanthus be,
Hector and Ajax will be there again, 15
Helen will come upon the wall to see

Then we shall rust in shade, or shine in strife,
And fluctuate 'twixt blind hopes and blind despairs,
And fancy that we put forth all our life,
And never know how with the soul it fares 20

Still doth the soul, from its lone fastness high,
Upon our life a ruling effluence send
And when it fails, fight as we will, we die,
And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.

13 1867-81 Men will renew

PROGRESS

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1867 and thereafter]

THE Master stood upon the mount, and taught
He saw a fire in his disciples' eyes,
'The old law,' they cried, 'is wholly come to nought,
Behold the new world rise'

'Was it,' the Lord then said, 'with scorn ye saw 5
The old law observed by Scribes and Pharisees?
I say unto you, see *ye* keep that law
More faithfully than these'

'Too hasty heads for ordering worlds, alas!
Think not that I to annul the law have will'd, 10
No jot, no tittle from the law shall pass,
'Till all have been fulfill'd'

So Christ said eighteen hundred years ago
And what then shall be said to those to-day,
Who cry aloud to lay the old world low 15
To clear the new world's way'

'Religious fervours! ardour misapplied!
Hence, hence,' they cry, 'ye do but keep man blind!
But keep him self-immersed, preoccupied,
And lame the active mind!' 20

Ah! from the old world let some one answer give
'Scorn ye this world, their tears, their inward cares'
I say unto you, see that *your* souls live
A deeper life than theirs!

'Say ye "The spirit of man has found new roads, 25
And we must leave the old faiths, and walk therein"?'—
Leave then the Cross as ye have left carved gods,
But guard the fire within!

3 1852-81 they said, 12 1852 shall be fulfill'd 1867-9
hath been fulfill'd 27-8 1852

Quench then the altar fires of your old Gods!
Quench not the fire within!

PROGRESS

'Bright else and fast the stream of life may roll,
And no man may the other's hurt behold, 30
Yet each will have one anguish—his own soul
Which perishes of cold'

Here let that voice make end, then, let a strain,
From a far lonelier distance, like the wind
Be heard, floating through heaven, and fill again 35
These men's profoundest mind

'Children of men! the unseen Power, whose eye
For ever doth accompany mankind,
Hath look'd on no religion scornfully
That men did ever find 40

'Which has not taught weak wills how much they can'
Which has not fall'n on the dry heart like rain'
Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man
Thou must be born again!

'Children of men! not that your age excel 45
In pride of life the ages of your sires,
But that ye think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well,
The Friend of man desires'

37-40 1852 'Children of men! the unseen Power, whose eye
Ever accompanies the march of man,
Hath without pain seen *no* religion die,
Since first the world began

Between 40 and 41 1852 reads

'That man must still to some new worship press
Hath in his eye ever but serv'd to show
The depth of that consuming restlessness
Which makes man's greatest woe.

40 1867 That man 47 1852 But that you too feel deeply, 1867
But that *you* think clear, feel deep, 1868, 1869 But that you think
1877-81 But that *ye* think '

REVOLUTIONS

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

BEFORE man parted for this earthly strand,
While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,
God put a heap of letters in his hand,
And bade him make with them what word he could

And man has turn'd them many times, made Greece, 5
Rome, England, France,—yes, nor in vain essay'd
Way after way, changes that never cease!
The letters have combined, something was made

But ah! an inextinguishable sense
Haunts him that he has not made what he should, 10
That he has still, though old, to recommence,
Since he has not yet found the word God would

And empire after empire, at their height
Of sway, have felt this boding sense come on,
Have felt their huge frames not constructed right, 15
And droop'd, and slowly died upon their throne

One day, thou say'st, there will at last appear
The word, the order, which God meant should be
—Ah! we shall know *that* well when it comes near,
The band will quit man's heart, he will breathe free. 20

SELF-DEPENDENCE

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

WEARY of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea

REVOLUTIONS 14 1877 have left [*sic*] SELF-DEPENDENCE 3 1852-69
the vessel's

SELF DEPENDENCE

And a look of passionate desire 5
O'er the sea and to the stars I send
Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

'Ah, once more,' I cried, 'ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew, 10
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!'

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer 15
'Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they

'Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy 20

'And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll,
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul

'Bounded by themselves, and unregardful 25
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see'

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear 30
'Resolve to be thyself, and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery!'

23 1852-7 alone they live, 1869 (only) Why?—self-poised
25 1852-7 and unobservant 29 From 1854 to 1881 the last stanza was
set off from the rest by printer's rule, a row of asterisks, or extra spacing
30 1852-7 my own

MORALITY

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '67, and thereafter]

We cannot kindle when we will
 The fire which in the heart resides,
 The spirit bloweth and is still,
 In mystery our soul abides
 But tasks in hours of insight will'd 5
 Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd

With aching hands and bleeding feet
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone,
 We bear the burden and the heat
 Of the long day, and wish 'twere done 10
 Not till the hours of light return,
 All we have built do we discern

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
 When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
 Ask, how *she* view'd thy self-control, 15
 Thy struggling, task'd morality—
 Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
 Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
 Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek, 20
 See, on her face a glow is spread,
 A strong emotion on her cheek!
 'Ah, child!' she cries, 'that strife divine,
 Whence was it, for it is not mine'

'There is no effort on *my* brow— 25
 I do not strive, I do not weep,
 I rush with the swift spheres and glow
 In joy, and when I will, I sleep
 Yet that severe, that earnest air,
 I saw, I felt it once—but where?' 30

2 1852-7 fire that 20 1852-7 thou wert

MORALITY

'I knew not yet the gauge of time,
 Nor wore the manacles of space,
 I felt it in some other clime,
 I saw it in some other place
 'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
 And lay upon the breast of God '

35

A SUMMER NIGHT

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

In the deserted, moon-blanch'd street,
 How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
 Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,
 Silent and white, unopening down,
 Repellent as the world,—but see,

5

A break between the housetops shows
 The moon! and, lost behind her, fading dim
 Into the dewy dark obscurity
 Down at the far horizon's rim,
 Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose!

10

And to my mind the thought
 Is on a sudden brought
 Of a past night, and a far different scene
 Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
 As clearly as at noon,

15

The spring-tide's brimming flow
 Heaved dazzlingly between,
 Houses, with long white sweep,
 Girdled the glistening bay,
 Behind, through the soft air,

20

The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away,
 That night was far more fair—
 But the same restless paces to and fro,
 And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,
 And the same bright, calm moon.

25

A SUMMER NIGHT 22 1890 (only) The night 24 1852 And the
 same agitated heart

A SUMMER NIGHT

And the calm moonlight seems to say
Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,
Which neither deadens into rest,
Nor ever feels the fiery glow
That whirls the spirit from itself away, 30
But fluctuates to and fro,
Never by passion quite possess'd
And never quite benumb'd by the world's sway?—
 And I, I know not if to pray
 Stull to be what I am, or yield and be 35
 Like all the other men I see

For most men in a brazen prison live,
 Where, in the sun's hot eye,
 With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
 Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give, 40
 Dreaming of nought beyond their prison-wall
 And as, year after year,
 Fresh products of their barren labour fall
 From their tired hands, and rest
 Never yet comes more near, 45
 Gloom settles slowly down over their breast,
 And while they try to stem
 The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,
 Death in their prison reaches them,
 Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest 50

And the rest, a few,
 Escape their prison and depart
 On the wide ocean of life anew
 There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
 Listeth, will sail, 55
 Nor doth he know how there prevail,
 Despotie on that sea,
 Trade-winds which cross it from eternity

28 1852, 1855 That neither deadens 1869 (only) Which never
 deadens 27-33 1852 quoted in roman 56 1852-5 Nor does he
 57 1852-5 on life's sea, 58 1852-5 Trade-winds that

A SUMMER NIGHT

Awhile he holds some false way, undebarr'd
 By thwarting signs, and braves 60
 The freshening wind and blackening waves
 And then the tempest strikes him, and between
 The lightning-bursts is seen
 Only a driving wreck,
 And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck 65
 With anguish'd face and flying hair
 Grasping the rudder hard,
 Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
 Still standing for some false, impossible shore
 And sterner comes the roar 70
 Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom
 Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
 And he too disappears, and comes no more

 Is there no life, but these alone?
 Madman or slave, must man be one? 75

 Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!
 Clearness divine!
 Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
 Of languor, though so calm, and, though so great,
 Are yet untroubled and unpassionate, 80
 Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,
 And, though so task'd, keep free from dust and soil!
 I will not say that your mild deeps retain
 A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
 Who have long'd deeply once, and long'd in vain— 85
 But I will rather say that you remain
 A world above man's head, to let him see
 How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
 How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
 How it were good to abide there, and breathe free, 90
 How fair a lot to fill
 Is left to each man still!

80 1881 And yet [*sic*] 90 1852, 1855 to sink there,
 1869-81 to live there, 91 1852 high a lot

THE BURIED LIFE

[*First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter*]

LIGHT flows our war of mocking words, and yet,
Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile! 5
But there's a something in this breast,
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine, 10
And let me read there, love! thy inmost soul.

Alas! is even love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what indeed they feel? 15
I knew the mass of men conceal'd
Their thoughts, for fear that if reveal'd
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reprov'd,
I knew they lived and moved 20
Trick'd in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves—and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love!—doth a like spell benumb
Our hearts, our voices?—must we too be dumb? 25

Ah! well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchain'd,
For that which seals them hath been deep-ordain'd!

2 1852-5 my eyes 23 1852 (only) There beats one heart
24 1852-5 does a like

THE BURIED LIFE

Fate, which foresaw 30
 How frivolous a baby man would be—
 By what distractions he would be possess'd,
 How he would pour himself in every strife,
 And well-nigh change his own identity—
 That it might keep from his capricious play 35
 His genuine self, and force him to obey
 Even in his own despite his being's law,
 Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
 The unregarded river of our life
 Pursue with indiscernible flow its way, 40
 And that we should not see
 The buried stream, and seem to be
 Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
 Though driving on with it eternally

 But often, in the world's most crowded streets, 45
 But often, in the din of strife,
 There rises an unspeakable desire
 After the knowledge of our buried life,
 A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
 In tracking out our true, original course, 50
 A longing to inquire
 Into the mystery of this heart which beats
 So wild, so deep in us—to know
 Whence our lives come and where they go
 And many a man in his own breast then delves, 55
 But deep enough, alas! none ever mines
 And we have been on many thousand lines,
 And we have shown, on each, spirit and power,
 But hardly have we, for one little hour,
 Been on our own line, have we been ourselves— 60
 Hardly had skill to utter one of all
 The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
 But they course on for ever unexpress'd

43 1852-5 Eddying about
 77 our thoughts come

52 1852-5 that beats
 58 1852-5 talent and power,

54 1852-

THE BURIED LIFE

And long we try in vain to speak and act
 Our hidden self, and what we say and do 65
 Is eloquent, is well—but 'tis not true!
 And then we will no more be rack'd
 With inward striving, and demand
 Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
 Their stupefying power, 70
 Ah yes, and they benumb us at our call!
 Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
 From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
 As from an infinitely distant land,
 Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey 75
 A melancholy into all our day

Only—but this is rare—
 When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
 When, jaded with the rush and glare
 Of the interminable hours, 80
 Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
 When our world-deafen'd ear
 Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd—
 A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
 And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again 85
 The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
 And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know
 A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
 And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
 The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze 90

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
 Wherein he doth for ever chase
 That flying and elusive shadow, rest
 An air of coolness plays upon his face,
 And an unwonted calm pervades his breast. 95
 And then he thinks he knows
 The hills where his life rose,
 And the sea where it goes

70 1852-5 stupifying

LINES

WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1867 and thereafter]

IN this lone, open glade I lie,
Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand,
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crown'd, red-boled pine-trees stand!

Birds here make song, each bird has his, 5
Across the girdling city's hum
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy, 10
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here!
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass! 15
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear

Scarce fresher is the mountain-sod
Where the tired angler lies, stretch'd out,
And, eased of basket and of rod,
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout 20

2 1852 dark trees on 3 MS as above 1852-68 at its head,
1869 (only) Where ends the glade, 1877 the MS reading restored
4 1852 (only) black-topp'd, Between 4 and 5 1852 (only) reads
(as in the MS)

The clouded sky is still and grey,
Through silken rifts soft peers the sun
Light the green-foliag'd chestnuts play,
The darker elms stand grave and dun.

5 1852 (only) The birds sing sweetly in these trees

LINES

In the huge world, which roars hard by,
Be others happy if they can!
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan

I, on men's impious uproar hurl'd, 25
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world
And now keeps only in the grave

Yet here is peace for ever new!
When I who watch them am away, 30
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass!
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass, 35
The child sleeps warmly in his bed

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar 40

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give!
Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live

A WISH

[*First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter*]

I ASK not that my bed of death
From bands of greedy heirs be free,
For these besiege the latest breath
Of fortune's favour'd sons, not me

21-4 *First inserted in 1867* 26 1852 (only) Think sometimes
34 1852, 1867 The flowers close,

A WISH

I ask not each kind soul to keep 5
Tearless, when of my death he hears.
Let those who will, if any, weep!
There are worse plagues on earth than tears.

I ask but that my death may find
The freedom to my life denied, 10
Ask but the folly of mankind
Then, then at last, to quit my side

Spare me the whispering, crowded room,
The friends who come, and gape, and go,
The ceremonious air of gloom— 15
All, which makes death a hideous show!

Nor bring, to see me cease to live,
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
To shake his sapient head, and give
The ill he cannot cure a name 20

Nor fetch, to take the accustom'd toll
Of the poor sinner bound for death,
His brother-doctor of the soul,
To canvass with official breath

The future and its viewless things— 25
That undiscover'd mystery
Which one who feels death's winnowing wings
Must needs read clearer, sure, than he!

Bring none of these, but let me be,
While all around in silence lies, 30
Moved to the window near, and see
Once more, before my dying eyes,

Bathed in the sacred dews of morn
The wide aerial landscape spread—
The world which was ere I was born, 35
The world which lasts when I am dead,

A WISH

Which never was the friend of *one*,
Nor promised love it could not give,
But lit for all its generous sun,
And lived itself, and made us live 40

There let me gaze, till I become
In soul, with what I gaze on, wed!
To feel the universe my home,
To have before my mind—instead

Of the sick room, the mortal strife, 45
The turmoil for a little breath—
The pure eternal course of life,
Not human combatings with death!

Thus feeling, gazing, might I grow
Composed, refresh'd, ennobled, clear, 50
Then willing let my spirit go
To work or wait elsewhere or here!

THE FUTURE

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1853, '54, '57, '69, and thereafter]

A WANDERER is man from his birth
He was born in a ship
On the breast of the river of Time,
Brimming with wonder and joy
He spreads out his arms to the light, 5
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream

45-6 1869 (only)

Of a sick room, a mortal strife,
A turmoil

49 1867-77 let me grow

THE FUTURE 1853, '54 these lines printed as a motto to the poem

For Nature hath long kept this inn, the Earth,
And many a guest hath she therein receiv'd—

THE FUTURE

As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been.
Whether he wakes,
Where the snowy mountainous pass,
Echoing the screams of the eagles, 10
Hems in its gorges the bed
Of the new-born clear-flowing stream,
Whether he first sees light
Where the river in gleaming rings
Sluggishly winds through the plain, 15
Whether in sound of the swallowing sea—
As is the world on the banks,
So is the mind of the man

Vainly does each, as he glides,
Fable and dream 20
Of the lands which the river of Time
Had left ere he woke on its breast,
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed
Only the tract where he sails
He wots of, only the thoughts, 25
Raised by the objects he passes, are his

Who can see the green earth any more
As she was by the sources of Time²
Who imagines her fields as they lay
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough² 30
Who thinks as they thought,
The tribes who then roam'd on her breast,
Her vigorous, primitive sons²

What girl
Now reads in her bosom as clear 35
As Rebekah read, when she sate
At eve by the palm-shaded well²
Who guards in her breast
As deep, as pellucid a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure² 40

32 1852-4 liv'd on her breast,

THE FUTURE

What bard,
At the height of his vision, can deem
Of God, of the world, of the soul,
With a plainness as near,
As flashing as Moses felt 45
When he lay in the night by his flock
On the starlit Arabian waste²
Can rise and obey
The beck of the Spirit like him²

This tract which the river of Time 50
Now flows through with us, is the plain
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore
Border'd by cities and hoarse
With a thousand cries is its stream.
And we on its breast, our minds 55
Are confused as the cries which we hear,
Changing and shot as the sights which we see

And we say that repose has fled
For ever the course of the river of Time
That cities will crowd to its edge 60
In a blacker, incessanter line,
That the din will be more on its banks,
Denser the trade on its stream,
Flatter the plain where it flows,
Fiercer the sun overhead 65
That never will those on its breast
See an ennobling sight,
Drink of the feeling of quiet again

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed 70

Haply, the river of Time—
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream—

THE FUTURE

May acquire, if not the calm 75
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own

And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the grey expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam 80
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike

Peace to the soul of the man on its breast—
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind 85
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea

ELEGIAC POEMS

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY¹⁶

[First published 1853 Reprinted 1854, '57, '69, and thereafter]

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill,
 Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
 No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
 Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
 Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head. 5
 But when the fields are still,
 And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
 And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
 Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
 Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest! 10

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—
 In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
 His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
 And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
 Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use— 15
 Here will I sit and wait,
 While to my ear from uplands far away
 The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
 With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
 All the live murmur of a summer's day 20

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
 And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be
 Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
 And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
 Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep, 25
 And air-swept lindens yield

5 1853-81 cropp'd grasses 10 1853-7 and 1877-81 renew the
 quest. In 1869 the present reading first appeared, but was not used again till
 1885 21 1854-7 Screen'd in 25 1853-81 Pale blue
 convolvulus

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
 Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
 And bower me from the August sun with shade,
 And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers 30
 And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
 Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
 The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
 Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
 Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door, 35
 One summer-morn forsook
 His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
 And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
 And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
 But came to Oxford and his friends no more 40
 But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
 Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
 Met him, and of his way of life enquired,
 Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
 His mates, had arts to rule as they desired 45
 The workings of men's brains,
 And they can bind them to what thoughts they will
 'And I,' he said, 'the secret of their art,
 When fully learn'd, will to the world impart,
 But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill ' 50
 Thus said, he left them, and return'd no more —
 But rumours hung about the country-side,
 That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
 Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
 In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey, 55
 The same the gipsies wore
 Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring,
 At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
 On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
 Had found him seated at their entering, 60
 33 1853-81 that Oxford scholar 34 1869-78, 1881 shining parts
 1880 pregnant parts 50 1853 (only) happy moments

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
 And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
 And put the shepherds, wanderer¹ on thy trace;
 And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
 I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place, 65
 Or in my boat I lie
 Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
 'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
 And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
 And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats 70
 For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
 Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
 Returning home on summer-nights, have met
 Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-huthe,
 {Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet, 75
 As the punt's rope chops round,
 And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
 And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
 Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
 And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream 80
 And then they land, and thou art seen no more!—
 Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
 To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
 Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
 Or cross a stile into the public way 85
 Oft thou hast given them store
 Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemony,
 Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves,
 And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
 But none hath words she can report of thee 90
 And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
 In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
 Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
 Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames,

76 1853-7 As the slow punt swings round

79 1853-4 distant woodland bowers,

77 1853-7 backwards

90 1853-69 has words

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass, 95
 Have often pass'd thee near
 Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown,
 Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
 Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
 But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone! 100

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
 Where at her open door the housewife darns,
 Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
 To watch the threshers in the mossy barns
 Children, who early range these slopes and late 105
 For cresses from the rills,
 Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
 The springing pastures and the feeding kine,
 And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
 Through the long dewy grass move slow away 110

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—
 Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
 Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
 With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,
 Above the forest-ground called Thessaly— 115
 The blackbird, picking food,
 Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all,
 So often has he known thee past him stray,
 Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
 And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall 120

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
 Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
 Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
 Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
 Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge? 125
 And thou hast climb'd the hill,

98 1853-7 thy outlandish 100 1853-69 wert gone 107 1853-
 7 thee watching 1869 thee haunting, 125 1853-7 towards
 Hinksey 1869-81 toward Hinksey

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range,
 Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
 The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
 Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange 130

But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown
 Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
 And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
 That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
 To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe, 135
 And thou from earth art gone
 Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
 Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
 Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
 Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade 140

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
 For what wears out the life of mortal men?
 'Tis that from change to change their being rolls,
 'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
 Exhaust the energy of strongest souls 145
 And numb the elastic powers
 Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
 And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
 To the just-pausing Genius we remit
 Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been 150

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?
 Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire,
 Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead!
 Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
 The generations of thy peers are fled, 155
 And we ourselves shall go,
 But thou possessest an immortal lot,
 And we imagine thee exempt from age
 And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
 Because thou hadst—what we, alas! have not. 160

150 1869-81 well-worn life

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
 Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
 Firm to their mark, not spent on other things,
 Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
 Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings
 O life unlike to ours! 166
 Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
 Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
 And each half lives a hundred different lives,
 Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope 170
 Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
 Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
 Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
 Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
 Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd, 175
 For whom each year we see
 Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new,
 Who hesitate and falter life away,
 And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—
 Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too? 180
 Yes, we await it!—but it still delays,
 And then we suffer! and amongst us one,
 Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
 His seat upon the intellectual throne,
 And all his store of sad experience he 185
 Lays bare of wretched days,
 Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
 And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
 And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
 And all his hourly varied anodynes 190
 This for our wisest! and we others pine,
 And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
 And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear,
 With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,

172 1857 Vague half-believers

175 1857 weak resolves

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

- Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair— 195
 But none has hope like thine!
 Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
 Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
 Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
 And every doubt long blown by time away 200
- O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
 And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames,
 Before this strange disease of modern life,
 With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
 Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rise— 205
 Fly hence, our contact fear!
 Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
 Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
 From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
 Wave us away, and keep thy solitude! 210
- Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
 Still clutching the inviolable shade,
 With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
 By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
 Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue 215
 On some mild pastoral slope
 Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
 Freshen thy flowers as in former years
 With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
 From the dark dingles, to the nightingales! 220
- But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
 For strong the infection of our mental strife,
 Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest,
 And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
 Like us distracted, and like us unblest 225
 Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
 Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
 And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made,
 And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
 Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours 230

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
 —As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
 Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
 Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
 The fringes of a southward-facing brow 235
 Among the Ægæan isles,
 And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
 Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
 Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—
 And knew the intruders on his ancient home, 240

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
 And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail,
 And day and night held on indignantly
 O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
 Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily, 245
 To where the Atlantic raves
 Outside the western straits, and unbent sails
 There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
 Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come,
 And on the beach undid his corded bales 250

THYRSIS¹⁷

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,*
 ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, *who died at Florence, 1861*

[First published in MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE, April 1866 Reprinted 1867
and thereafter]

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
 In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same,
 The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
 And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,

THYRSIS 1867, 1868 *as a prefatory quotation*

Thus yesterday, to-day, to-morrow come,
 They hustle one another and they pass,
 But all our hustling morrows only make
 The smooth to-day of God

—From Lucretius, *an unpublished Tragedy*

THYRSIS

- And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks— 5
 Are ye too changed, ye hills?
 See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
 To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
 Here came I often, often, in old days—
 Thyrsis and I, we still had Thyrsis then 10
- Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
 Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
 The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
 The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
 The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames?
 This winter-eve is warm, 16
 Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
 The tender purple spray on copse and briers!
 And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
 She needs not June for beauty's heightening, 20
- Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—
 Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
 Befalls me wandering through this upland dim
 Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour,
 Now seldom come I, since I came with him 25
 That single elm-tree bright
 Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?
 We prized it dearly, while it stood, we said,
 Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead,
 While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on 30
- Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
 But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick,
 And with the country-folk acquaintance made
 By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick
 Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd 35
 Ah me! thus many a year

12 1866 (*Macmillan's Magazine*), 1867, 1868 Up past the wood
 29 1866-9 Our friend, the Scholar-Gipsy

THYRSIS

My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart,
But Thyrsis of his own will went away 40

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates, but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep 45
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head
He went, his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground,
He could not wait their passing, he is dead 50

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day—
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May 55
And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I! 60

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell, 65
And stocks in fragrant blow,
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmīne-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star. 70

44 1866-8: lower'd 65 1867 its 66 1868 fragrant blow [sic]

THYRSIS

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
 What matters it? next year he will return,
 And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
 With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
 And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways, 75
 And scent of hay new-mown
 But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see,
 See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
 And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
 For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee! 80
 Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
 But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
 Some good survivor with his flute would go,
 Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate,
 And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow, 85
 And relax Pluto's brow,
 And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
 Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
 Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
 And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead 90
 O easy access to the hearer's grace
 When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
 For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
 She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
 She knew each lily white which Enna yields, 95
 Each rose with blushing face,
 She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain
 But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
 Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd,
 And we should tease her with our plaint in vain! 100
 Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
 Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
 In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!
 Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?

71 1866 is gone!
 Cumnor

86 1866 unbend Pluto's brow,

99 1867-68

THYRSIS

I know the wood which hides the daffodil, 105
 I know the Fyfield tree,
 I know what white, what purple fritillaries
 The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
 Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
 And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries, 110
 I know these slopes, who knows them if not I?—
 But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
 With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
 Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
 High tower'd the spikes of purple orchuses, 115
 Hath since our day put by
 The coronals of that forgotten time,
 Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
 And only in the hidden brookside gleam
 Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime 120
 Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
 Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
 Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among
 And darting swallows and light water-gnats, 125
 We track'd the shy Thames shore?
 Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
 Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
 Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?—
 They all are gone, and thou art gone as well! 130
Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
 The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with grey,
 I feel her finger light 136
 Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train,—
 The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
 The heart less bounding at emotion new,
 And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again] 140

THYRSIS

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
 To the less practised eye of sanguine youth,
 And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
 The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
 Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare! 145
 Unbreachable the fort
 Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall,
 And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
 And near and real the charm of thy repose,
 And night as welcome as a friend would fall 150

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
 Of quiet!—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
 A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
 As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
 From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come 155
 Quick! let me fly, and cross
 Into yon farther field!—'Tis done, and see,
 Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
 The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
 Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree! 160

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
 The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
 The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
 And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out
 I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night, 165
 Yet, happy omen, hail!
 Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
 (For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
 The morningless and unawakening sleep
 Under the flowery oleanders pale), 170

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
 Ah, vain! These English fields, thus upland dim,
 These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
 That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him,

142 1866-8 the unpractised eye 157 1866-9 further

THYRSIS

To a boon southern country he is fled, 175
 And now in happier air,
 Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
 (And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
 I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
 Within a folding of the Apennine, 180
 Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!—
 Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
 In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
 For thee the Lityerses-song again
 Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing,¹⁸ 185
 Sings his Sicilian fold,
 His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
 And how a call celestial round him rang,
 And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
 And all the marvel of the golden skies 190
 There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
 Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair
 Despair I will not, while I yet descry
 'Neath the mild canopy of English air
 That lonely tree against the western sky 195
 Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
 Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
 Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
 Woods with anemones in flower till May,
 Know him a wanderer still, then why not me? 200
 A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
 Shy to illumine, and I seek it too
 This does not come with houses or with gold,
 With place, with honour, and a flattering crew,
 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold— 205
 But the smoooth-slipping weeks
 Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired,

181 1866, 1867 immortal strains

194 1866-78, 1881 soft canopy

1880 mild canopy (as in present reading)

198 1866 where the sheep

THYRSIS

Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone,
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired 210
 Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound,
 Thou wanderdest with me for a little hour!
 Men gave thee nothing, but this happy quest,
 If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
 If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest 215
 And this rude Cumner ground,
 Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
 Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
 Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
 And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields 220
 What though the music of thy rustic flute
 Kept not for long its happy, country tone,
 Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
 Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
 Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
 It fail'd, and thou wast mute! 226
 Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
 And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
 And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
 Left human haunt, and on alone till night 230
 Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
 'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
 Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home
 —Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying
 roar,
 Let in thy voice a whisper often come, 235
 To chase fatigue and fear
Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side 240

208 1866 is he gone, 211 1866-8 wert bound 216 1867-8 Cumnor
 226 1866 wert mute

MEMORIAL VERSES

APRIL, 1850

[First published in FRASER'S MAGAZINE, June 1850 Reprinted 1852, '55, '69, and thereafter]

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,
 Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease
 But one such death remain'd to come,
 The last poetic voice is dumb—
 We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb 5
 When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
 We bow'd our head and held our breath
 He taught us little, but our soul
 Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll
 With shivering heart the strife we saw 10
 Of passion with eternal law,
 And yet with reverential awe
 We watch'd the fount of fiery life
 Which served for that Titanic strife
 When Goethe's death was told, we said 15
 Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head
 Physician of the iron age,
 Goethe has done his pilgrimage
 He took the suffering human race,
 He read each wound, each weakness clear, 20
 And struck his finger on the place,
 And said *Thou ailest here, and here!*
 He look'd on Europe's dying hour
 Of fitful dream and feverish power,
 His eye plunged down the weltering strife, 25

Date, Both MS and Fraser give the date in full, April 27th, 1850
 5 *MS, Fraser* We stand to-day at 1852, 1855 What shall be said o'er
 Wordsworth's tomb? 6 1877 where shut [*sic*] 7 *MS, Fraser*
 bow'd our heads 14 *MS* Suffic'd for that Titanic strife *Fraser*
 Which flow'd for that Titanic strife 15 *MS, Fraser* When Goethe
 pass'd away, 16-18 1855 *italics* 20 *Fraser* He scann'd each
 wound, each weakness near, *The reading of the MS was restored in 1852*
 25 *MS, Fraser* seething strife,

MEMORIAL VERSES

The turmoil of expiring life—
 He said *The end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there!
 And he was happy, if to know
 Causes of things, and far below 30
 His feet to see the lurid flow
 Of terror, and insane distress,
 And headlong fate, be happiness

And Wordsworth!—Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
 For never has such soothing voice 35
 Been to your shadowy world convey'd,
 Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
 Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
 Through Hades, and the mournful gloom
 Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye, 40
 Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
 He too upon a wintry clime
 Had fallen—on this iron time
 Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears
 He found us when the age had bound 45
 Our souls in its benumbing round,
 He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears
 He laid us as we lay at birth
 On the cool flowery lap of earth,
 Smiles broke from us and we had ease, 50
 The hills were round us, and the breeze
 Went o'er the sun-lit fields again,
 Our foreheads felt the wind and rain
 Our youth return'd, for there was shed

40 MS, Fraser, 1852 is gone 43 MS, Fraser Was fallen, on the
 iron time 44 First inserted in 1852 46 MS, Fraser Our spirits
 in a brazen round Between 47 and 48 these lines appear in MS and
 in Fraser He tore us from the prison-cell
 Of festering thoughts and personal fears,
 Where we had long been doom'd to dwell
 48 MS Once more we lay as erst at birth, 54 MS, Fraser youth
 came back

MEMORIAL VERSES

On spirits that had long been dead, 55
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
The freshness of the early world

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course 60
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force,
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel, 65
Others will strengthen us to bear—
But who, ah! who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly—
But who, like him, will put it by? 70

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

STANZAS

IN MEMORY OF EDWARD QUILLINAN

[First published 1853 Reprinted 1854, '57, '69, and thereafter]

I SAW him sensitive in frame,
I knew his spirits low,
And wish'd him health, success, and fame—
I do not wish it now

56 *MS*, Fraser Spirits deep-crushed 60 Fraser (only) in its course
62 *MS*, Fraser where shall

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF EDWARD QUILLINAN *Title*, 1853-69 Stanzas In
memory of the late Edward Quillinan, Esq

STANZAS

For these are all their own reward, 5
 And leave no good behind,
 They try us, oftenest make us hard,
 Less modest, pure, and kind

Alas! yet to the suffering man,
 In this his mortal state, 10
 Friends could not give what fortune can—
 Health, ease, a heart elate

But he is now by fortune foil'd
 No more, and we retain
 The memory of a man unspoil'd, 15
 Sweet, generous, and humane—

With all the fortunate have not,
 With gentle voice and brow
 —Alive, we would have changed his lot,
 We would not change it now 20

STANZAS FROM CARNAC

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

FAR on its rocky knoll descried
 Saint Michael's chapel cuts the sky
 I climb'd,—beneath me, bright and wide,
 Lay the lone coast of Brittany

Bright in the sunset, weird and still, 5
 It lay beside the Atlantic wave,
 As though the wizard Merlin's will
 Yet charm'd it from his forest-grave

6 *Rotha Quillinan's MS Album*, (dated December 27, 1851) leave no trace
 10 *MS album* living state 15 *MS album* image of a Man
 STANZAS FROM CARNAC. Title, 1867-9 Stanzas composed at Carnac,
 May 6, 1859 7 *MS*, 1867 As if

STANZAS FROM CARNAC

Behind me on their grassy sweep,
Bearded with lichen, scrawl'd and grey, 10
The giant stones of Carnac sleep,
In the mild evening of the May

No priestly stern procession now
Moves through their rows of pillars old,
No victims bleed, no Druids bow— 15
Sheep make the daisied aisles their fold

From bush to bush the cuckoo flies,
The orchis red gleams everywhere,
Gold furze with broom in blossom vies,
The blue-bells perfume all the air. 20

And o'er the glistening, lonely land,
Rise up, all round, the Christian spires,
The church of Carnac, by the strand,
Catches the westering sun's last fires

And there, across the watery way, 25
See, low above the tide at flood,
The sickle-sweep of Quiberon Bay,
Whose beach once ran with loyal blood!

And beyond that, the Atlantic wide!—
All round, no soul, no boat, no hail, 30
But, on the horizon's verge descried,
Hangs, touch'd with light, one snowy sail!

Ah! where is he, who should have come¹⁹
Where that far sail is passing now,
Past the Loire's mouth, and by the foam 35
Of Finistère's unquiet brow,

10 MS old and grey 14 MS, 1867-81 Streams through
16 MS, 1867 furze-grown aisles 19 MS, 1867 Gold broom with furze
20 1868-77 The furze-scent perfumes all the air 32 MS distant
sail.

STANZAS FROM CARNAC

Home, round into the English wave⁹
 —He tarries where the Rock of Spain
 Mediterranean waters lave,
 He enters not the Atlantic main 40

Oh, could he once have reach'd this air
 Freshen'd by plunging tides, by showers!
 Have felt this breath he loved, of fair
 Cool northern fields, and grass, and flowers!

He long'd for it—press'd on —In vain! 45
 At the Straits fail'd that spirit brave
 The south was parent of his pain,
 The south is mistress of his grave

A SOUTHERN NIGHT

[First published in VICTORIA REGIA, 1861 Reprinted 1867 and hereafter]

THE sandy spits, the shore-lock'd lakes,
 Melt into open, moonlit sea,
 The soft Mediterranean breaks
 At my feet, free

Dotting the fields of corn and vine, 5
 Like ghosts the huge, gnarl'd olives stand
 Behind, that lovely mountain-line!
 While, by the strand,

Cette, with its glistening houses white,
 Curves with the curving beach away 10
 To where the lighthouse beacons bright
 Far in the bay

Ah! such a night, so soft, so lone,
 So moonlit, saw me once of yore²⁰
 Wander unquiet, and my own 15
 Vext heart deplore

38 MS He lingers

45 MS He long'd it, he press'd on—

A SOUTHERN NIGHT

But now that trouble is forgot,
 Thy memory, thy pain, to-night,
 My brother! and thine early lot,²¹
 Possess me quite 20

The murmur of this Midland deep
 Is heard to-night around thy grave,
 There, where Gibraltar's cannon'd steep
 O'erfrowns the wave

For there, with bodily anguish keen, 25
 With Indian heats at last fordone,
 With public toil and private teen—
 Thou sank'st, alone

Slow to a stop, at morning grey,
 I see the smoke-crown'd vessel come, 30
 Slow round her paddles dies away
 The seething foam

A boat is lower'd from her side,
 Ah, gently place him on the bench!
 That spirit—if all have not yet died— 35
 A breath might quench

Is this the eye, the footstep fast,
 The mien of youth we used to see,
 Poor, gallant boy!—for such thou wast,
 Still art, to me 40

The limbs their wonted tasks refuse,
 The eyes are glazed, thou canst not speak;
 And whiter than thy white burnous
 That wasted cheek!

Enough! The boat, with quiet shock, 45
 Unto its haven coming nigh,
 Touches, and on Gibraltar's rock
 Lands thee to die

26 1861 (*Victoria Regia*) suns
 39 1861 thou wert,

37 1861 the eye, the form alert,

A SOUTHERN NIGHT

Ah me! Gibraltar's strand is far,
But farther yet across the brine
Thy dear wife's ashes buried are,
Remote from thine
50

For there, where morning's sacred fount
Its golden rain on earth confers,
The snowy Himalayan Mount
O'ershadows hers
55

Strange irony of fate, alas,
Which, for two jaded English, saves,
When from their dusty life they pass,
Such peaceful graves!
60

In cities should we English lie,
Where cries are rising ever new,
And men's incessant stream goes by—
We who pursue

Our business with unslackening stride,
Traverse in troops, with care-fill'd breast,
The soft Mediterranean side,
The Nile, the East,
65

And see all sights from pole to pole,
And glance, and nod, and bustle by,
And never once possess our soul
Before we die
70

Not by those hoary Indian hills,
Not by this gracious Midland sea
Whose floor to-night sweet moonshine fills,
Should our graves be
75

Some sage, to whom the world was dead,
And men were specks, and life a play,
Who made the roots of trees his bed,
And once a day
80

A SOUTHERN NIGHT

With staff and gourd his way did bend
 To villages and homes of man,
 For food to keep him till he end
 His mortal span

And the pure goal of being reach, 85
 Hoar-headed, wrinkled, clad in white,
 Without companion, without speech,
 By day and night

Pondering God's mysteries untold,
 And tranquil as the glacier-snows 90
 He by those Indian mountains old
 Might well repose

Some grey crusading knight austere,
 Who bore Saint Louis company,
 And came home hurt to death, and here 95
 Landed to die,

Some youthful troubadour, whose tongue
 Fill'd Europe once with his love-pain,
 Who here outworn had sunk, and sung
 His dying strain, 100

Some girl, who here from castle-bower,
 With furtive step and cheek of flame,
 'Twixt myrtle-hedges all in flower
 By moonlight came

To meet her pirate-lover's ship, 105
 And from the wave-kiss'd marble stair
 Beckon'd him on, with quivering lip
 And floating hair,

82 1861	haunts of man.	86 1861-81	Grey-headed	96 1861
	Touch'd shore to die,		99 1861-9	here outworn sunk
100 1861	A dying strain,	101 1861	palace-bower	108 1867 (only)
	unbound hair,			

A SOUTHERN NIGHT

And lived some moons in happy trance,
Then learnt his death and pined away— 110
Such by these waters of romance

'Twas meet to lay

But you—a grave for knight or sage,
Romantic, solitary, still,
O spent ones of a work-day age! 115
Befits you ill

So sang I, but the midnight breeze,
Down to the brimm'd, moon-charmed main,
Comes softly through the olive-trees,
And checks my strain 120

I think of her, whose gentle tongue
All plaint in her own cause controll'd,
Of thee I think, my brother! young
In heart, high-soul'd—

That comely face, that cluster'd brow, 125
That cordial hand, that bearing free,
I see them still, I see them now,
Shall always see!

And what but gentleness untired,
And what but noble feeling warm, 130
Wherever shown, howe'er inspired,
Is grace, is charm?

What else is all these waters are,
What else is steep'd in lucid sheen,
What else is bright, what else is fair, 135
What else serene?

Mild o'er her grave, ye mountains, shine!
Gently by his, ye waters, glide!
To that in you which is divine
They were allied 140

113 1861 a grave for Girl or Sage, 131 1861, 1867 howe'er attur'd,

HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

APRIL, 1855

[First published in FRASER'S MAGAZINE, May 1855 Reprinted 1877 and thereafter
Extracted lines, entitled 'Early Death and Fame', reprinted separately
1867 and thereafter]

WHERE, under Loughrigg, the stream
Of Rotha sparkles through fields
Vested for ever with green,
Four years since, in the house
Of a gentle spirit, now dead— 5
Wordsworth's son-in-law, friend—
I saw the meeting of two
Gifted women ²² The one,
Brilliant with recent renown,
Young, unpractised, had told 10
With a master's accent her feign'd
Story of passionate life,
The other, maturer in fame,
Earning, she too, her praise
First in fiction, had since 15
Widen'd her sweep, and survey'd
History, politics, mind

The two held converse, they wrote
In a book which of world-famous souls

1-8 This opening passage in Fraser 1855, read as follows

Where, under Loughrigg, the stream
Of Rotha sparkles, the fields
Are green, in the house of one
Friendly and gentle, now dead,
Wordsworth's son-in-law, friend—
Four years since, on a mark'd
Evening, a meeting I saw
Two friends met there, two fam'd
Gifted women. The one,

12 Fraser 1855 History of

18 Fraser 1855 They met, held

19 Fraser 1855 glorious souls

HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

Kept the memorial,—bard, 20
 Warrior, statesman, had sign'd
 Their names, chief glory of all,
 Scott had bestow'd there his last
 Breathings of song, with a pen
 Tottering, a death-stricken hand 25

Hope at that meeting smiled fair
 Years in number, it seem'd,
 Lay before both, and a fame
 Heighten'd, and multiplied power —
 Behold! The elder, to-day, 30
 Lies expecting from death,
 In mortal weakness, a last
 Summons! the younger is dead!

First to the living we pay
 Mournful homage,—the Muse 35
 Gains not an earth-deafen'd ear

Hail to the steadfast soul,
 Which, unflinching and keen,
 Wrought to erase from its depth
 Mist and illusion and fear! 40
 Hail to the spirit which dared
 Trust its own thoughts, before yet
 Echoed her back by the crowd!
 Hail to the courage which gave
 Voice to its creed, ere the creed 45
 Won consecration from time!

20 *Fraser 1855* Held memorial Bard, 21 *Fraser 1855* had left
 22 *Fraser 1855* chief treasure 23 *Fraser 1855* had consign'd
 26 *Took place of two lines in Fraser 1855*

I beheld, the obscure
 Saw the famous Alas!

After line 46 these lines appear in Fraser 1855

Turn, O Death, on the vile,
 Turn on the foolish the stroke
 Hanging now o'er a head
 Active, beneficent, pure!

HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

Turn we next to the dead
—How shall we honour the young,
The ardent, the gifted? how mourn?
Console we cannot, her ear
Is deaf Far northward from here,
In a churchyard high 'mid the moors
Of Yorkshire, a little earth
Stops it for ever to praise

50

Where, behind Keighley, the road
Up to the heart of the moors
Between heath-clad showery hills
Runs, and colliers' carts
Poach the deep ways coming down,

55

But, if the prayer be in vain—
But, if the stroke *must* fall—
Her, whom we cannot save,
What might we say to console?

She will not see her country lose
Its greatness, nor the reign of fools prolong'd
She will behold no more
This ignominious spectacle,
Power dropping from the hand
Of paralytic factions, and no soul
To snatch and wield it will not see
Her fellow-people sit
Helplessly gazing on their own decline

Myrtle and rose fit the young,
Laurel and oak the mature
Private affections, for these,
Have run their circle, and left
Space for things far from themselves,
Thoughts of the general weal,
Country, and public cares
Public cares, which move
Seldom and faintly the depth
Of younger passionate souls
Plung'd in themselves, who demand
Only to live by the heart,
Only to love and be lov'd

HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

And a rough, grimed race have their homes— 60
 There on its slope is built
 The moorland town But the church
 Stands on the crest of the hill,
 Lonely and bleak,—at its side
 The parsonage-house and the graves. 65
 Strew with laurel the grave
 Of the early-dying! Alas,
 Early she goes on the path
 To the silent country, and leaves
 Half her laurels unwon, 70
 Dying too soon!—yet green
 Laurels she had, and a course
 Short, but redoubled by fame

62 1877 (only) moorland place
 Fraser 1855

After line 65 these lines appear in

See! in the desolate house
 The childless father! Alas—
 Age, whom the most of us chide,
 Chide, and put back, and delay—
 Come, unupbraided for once!
 Lay thy benumbing hand,
 Gratefully cold, on this brow!
 Shut out the grief, the despair!
 Weaken the sense of his loss!
 Deadened the infinite pain!

Another grief I see,
 Younger but thus the Muse,
 In pity and silent awe
 Revering what she cannot soothe,
 With veil'd face and bow'd head,
 Salutes, and passes by

66 Fraser 1855 with roses 73 Fraser 1855 yet redoubled
 line 73 these lines appeared in Fraser 1855

After

For him who must live many years
 That life is best which slips away
 Out of the light, and mutely; which avoids
 Fame, and her less-fair followers, Envy, Strife,
 Stupid Detraction, Jealousy, Cabal,
 Insincere Praises —which descends
 The mossy quiet track to Age.

HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

And not friendless, and not
 Only with strangers to meet, 75
 Faces ungreeting and cold,
 Thou, O mourn'd one, to-day
 Enterest the house of the grave!
 Those of thy blood, whom thou lov'dst,
 Have preceded thee—young, 80
 Loving, a sisterly band,
 Some in art, some in gift
 Inferior—all in fame
 They, like friends, shall receive
 This comer, greet her with joy, 85
 Welcome the sister, the friend,
 Hear with delight of thy fame!

Round thee they lie—the grass
 Blows from their graves to thy own!
 She, whose genius, though not 90
 Puissant like thine, was yet
 Sweet and graceful,—and she
 (How shall I sing her?) whose soul
 Knew no fellow for might,
 Passion, vehemence, grief, 95
 Daring, since Byron died,

But, when immature Death
 Beckons too early the guest
 From the half-tried Banquet of Life,
 Young, in the bloom of his days,
 Leaves no leisure to press,
 Slow and surely, the sweet
 Of a tranquil life in the shade—
 Fuller for him be the hours!
 Give him emotion, though pain!
 Let him live, let him feel, *I have liv'd*.
 Heap up his moments with life!
 Quicken his pulses with Fame!

These lines were published separately, in New Poems, 1867, and in the edition of 1869, under the title 'Early Death and Fame' See p 199f for alterations made
 74 Fraser 1855 friendless, nor yet 82 Fraser 1855 Some in gift,
 some in art 89 Fraser 1855 graves toward thine.

HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

That world-famed son of fire—she, who sank
 Baffled, unknown, self-consumed,
 Whose too bold dying song²³
 Sturr'd, like a clarion-blast, my soul. 100

Of one, too, I have heard,
 A brother—sleeps he here?
 Of all that gifted race
 Not the least gifted, young,
 Unhappy, eloquent—the child 105
 Of many hopes, of many tears
 O boy, if here thou sleep'st, sleep well!
 On thee too did the Muse
 Bright in thy cradle smile,
 But some dark shadow came 110
 (I know not what) and interposed
 Sleep, O cluster of friends,
 Sleep!—or only when May,
 Brought by the west-wind, returns
 Back to your native heaths, 115
 And the plover is heard on the moors,
 Yearly awake to behold
 The opening summer, the sky,
 The shining moorland—to hear
 The drowsy bee, as of old, 120
 Hum o'er the thyme, the grouse
 Call from the heather in bloom!
 Sleep, or only for this
 Break your united repose!

EPILOGUE

So I sang, but the Muse, 125
 Shaking her head, took the harp—
 Stern interrupted my strain,
 Angrily smote on the chords

100 1877-81 Shook, like a clarion-blast, 103 *Fraser 1855* his gifted
 105 *Fraser 1855* Unhappy, beautiful, the cause 125-38 *The Epilogue*
added in 1877

HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

April showers
Rush o'er the Yorkshire moors 130
Stormy, through driving mist,
Loom the blurr'd hills, the rain
Lashes the newly-made grave
Unquiet souls!
—In the dark fermentation of earth, 135
In the never idle workshop of nature,
In the eternal movement,
Ye shall find yourselves again!

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER 1857

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

COLDLY, sadly descends
The autumn-evening The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace, 5
Silent,—hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows,—but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere, 10
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid
There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening But ah! 15
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigour, again,
In the gloom of November we pass'd

RUGBY CHAPEL

Days not dark at thy side, 20
 Seasons impair'd not the ray
 Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
 Such thou wast! and I stand
 In the autumn evening, and think
 Of bygone autumns with thee 25

Fifteen years have gone round
 Since thou arosest to tread,
 In the summer-morning, the road
 Of death, at a call unforeseen,
 Sudden For fifteen years, 30
 We who till then in thy shade
 Rested as under the boughs
 Of a mighty oak, have endured
 Sunshine and rain as we might,
 Bare, unshaded, alone, 35
 Lacking the shelter of thee

O strong soul, by what shore
 Tarriest thou now? For that force,
 Surely, has not been left vain!
 Somewhere, surely, afar, 40
 In the sounding labour-house vast
 Of being, is practised that strength,
 Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
 Conscious or not of the past, 45
 Still thou performest the word
 Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
 Prompt, unwearied, as here!
 Still thou upraiest with zeal
 The humble good from the ground, 50
 Sternly represses the bad!
 Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse

20 MS, 1867-9 Days not of gloom
 cheerfulness

22 MS, 1867-77 thine even

RUGBY CHAPEL

Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twi'x vice and virtue, reviv'st,
Succourest!—this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?—
Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hur'l'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing, and then they die—
Perish,—and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,
Foam'd for a moment, and gone

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path—
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance!—but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk

RUGBY CHAPEL

Gorges, o'er mountains in snow
 Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
 Then, on the height, comes the storm 90
 Thunder crashes from rock
 To rock, the cataracts reply,
 Lightnings dazzle our eyes
 Roaring torrents have breach'd
 The track, the stream-bed descends 95
 In the place where the wayfarer once
 Planted his footstep—the spray
 Boils o'er its borders' aloft
 The unseen snow-beds dislodge
 Their hanging ruin, alas, 100
 Havoc is made in our train!
 Friends, who set forth at our side,
 Falter, are lost in the storm
 We, we only are left!
 With frowning foreheads, with lips 105
 Sternly compress'd, we strain on,
 On—and at nightfall at last
 Come to the end of our way,
 To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks,
 Where the gaunt and taciturn host; 110
 Stands on the threshold, the wind
 Shaking his thin white hairs—
 Holds his lantern to scan
 Our storm-beat figures, and asks
 Whom in our party we bring? 115
 Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer We bring
 Only ourselves! we lost
 Sight of the rest in the storm
 Hardly ourselves we fought through, 120
 Stripp'd, without friends, as we are
 Friends, companions, and train,
 The avalanche swept from our side

RUGBY CHAPEL

But thou would'st not *alone*
 Be saved, my father! *alone* 125
 Conquer and come to thy goal,
 Leaving the rest in the wild
 We were weary, and we
 Fearful, and we in our march
 Fain to drop down and to die 130
 Still thou turnedst, and still
 Beckonedst the trembler, and still
 Gavest the weary thy hand

 If, in the paths of the world,
 Stones might have wounded thy feet, 135
 Toil or dejection have tried
 Thy spirit, of that we saw
 Nothing—to us thou wast still
 Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
 Therefore to thee it was given 140
 Many to save with thyself,
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand }
 And through thee I believe 145
 In the noble and great who are gone,
 Pure souls honour'd and blest
 By former ages, who else—
 Such, so soulless, so poor,
 Is the race of men whom I see— 150
 Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
 Seem'd but a cry of desire
 Yes! I believe that there lived
 Others like thee in the past,
 Not like the men of the crowd 155
 Who all round me to-day
 Bluster or cringe, and make life
 Hideous, and arid, and vile,

138 MS, 1867-9 wert still

RUGBY CHAPEL

But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good, 160
Helpers and friends of mankind

Servants of God!—or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind, 165
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost—
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died! 170

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line
Where are they tending?—A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal 175

Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe,
Factions divide them, their host 180
Threatens to break, to dissolve
—Ah, keep, keep them combined!

Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive,
Sole they shall stray, in the rocks 185
Stagger for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear, 190
Radiant with ardour divine!

185 1877-81 on the rocks 186 MS, 1867-9 Labour for ever in
vain, 1877-81 Batter for ever in vain, 1881 MS alteration
Labour for ever [*not adopted*]

RUGBY CHAPEL

Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow 195
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave! 200
Order, courage, return
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line, 205
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God

HEINE'S GRAVE

[*First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter*]

'HENRI HEINE'——'tis here!
That black tombstone, the name
Carved there—no more! and the smooth,
Swarded alleys, the limes
Touch'd with yellow by hot 5
Summer, but under them still,
In September's bright afternoon,
Shadow, and verdure, and cool
Trim Montmartre! the faint
Murmur of Paris outside, 10
Crisp everlasting-flowers,
Yellow and black, on the graves

Half blind, palsied, in pain,
Hither to come, from the streets'

HEINE'S GRAVE 2 1867-82 The black tombstone

HEINE'S GRAVE

Uproar, surely not loath 15
 Wast thou, Heine!—to lie
 Quiet, to ask for closed
 Shutters, and darken'd room,
 And cool drinks, and an eased
 Posture, and opium, no more, 20
 Hither to come, and to sleep
 Under the wings of Renown

Ah! not little, when pain
 Is most quelling, and man
 Easily quell'd, and the fine 25
 Temper of genius so soon
 Thrills at each smart, is the praise,
 Not to have yielded to pain!
 No small boast, for a weak
 Son of mankind, to the earth 30
 Pinn'd by the thunder, to rear
 His bolt-scathed front to the stars,
 And, undaunted, retort
 'Gainst thick-crashing, insane,
 Tyrannous tempests of bale, 35
 Arrowy lightnings of soul

Hark! through the alley resounds
 Mocking laughter! A film
 Creeps o'er the sunshine, a breeze
 Ruffles the warm afternoon, 40
 Saddens my soul with its chill
 Gibing of spirits in scorn
 Shakes every leaf of the grove,
 Mars the benignant repose
 Of this amiable home of the dead 45

Bitter spirits, ye claim
 Heine!—Alas, he is yours!

25-7 1867-9

and the fine
 Temper of genius alive
 Quickest to ill,

HEINE'S GRAVE

Only a moment I long'd
 Here in the quiet to snatch
 From such mates the outworn
 Poet, and steep him in calm
 Only a moment! I knew
 Whose he was who is here
 Buried—I knew he was yours!
 Ah, I knew that I saw
 Here no sepulchre built
 In the laurell'd rock, o'er the blue
 Naples bay, for a sweet
 Tender Virgil! no tomb
 On Ravenna sands, in the shade
 Of Ravenna pines, for a high
 Austere Dante! no grave
 By the Avon side, in the bright
 Stratford meadows, for thee,
 Shakespeare! loveliest of souls,
 Peerless in radiance, in joy
 What, then, so harsh and malign,
 Heine! distils from thy life
 Poisons the peace of thy grave
 I chide with thee not, that thy sharp
 Upbraidings often assail'd
 England, my country—for we,
 Heavy and sad, for her sons,
 Long since, deep in our hearts,
 Echo the blame of her foes
 We, too, sigh that she flags,
 We, too, say that she now—
 Scarce comprehending the voice
 Of her greatest, golden-mouth'd sons
 Of a former age any more—
 Stupidly travels her round

67 1867-9 What so harsh and malign, 73 1867, 1868 Fearful and
 sad, 1869 Troublous and sad,

HEINE'S GRAVE

Of mechanic business, and lets
 Slow die out of her life
 Glory, and genius, and joy
 So thou arraign'st her, her foe, 85
 So we arraign her, her sons

Yes, we arraign her! but she,
 The weary Titan, with deaf
 Ears, and labour-dimm'd eyes,
 Regarding neither to right 90
 Nor left, goes passively by,
 Staggering on to her goal,
 Bearing on shoulders immense,
 Atlantean, the load,
 Wellnigh not to be borne, 95
 Of the too vast orb of her fate

But was it thou—I think
 Surely it was!—that bard
 Unnamed, who, Goethe said,
Had every other gift, but wanted love, 100
 Love, without which the tongue
 Even of angels sounds amiss²

Charm is the glory which makes
 Song of the poet divine,
 Love is the fountain of charm 105
 How without charm wilt thou draw,
 Poet! the world to thy way?²
 Not by the lightnings of wit—
 Not by the thunder of scorn!
 These to the world, too, are given, 110
 Wit it possesses, and scorn—
 Charm is the poet's alone
Hollow and dull are the great,
And artists envious, and the mob profane.
 We know all this, we know! 115
 Cam'st thou from heaven, O child

HEINE'S GRAVE

Of light! but thus to declare?
Alas, to help us forget
Such barren knowledge awhile,
God gave the poet his song! 120

Therefore a secret unrest
Tortured thee, brilliant and bold!
Therefore triumph itself
Tasted amiss to thy soul
Therefore, with blood of thy foes, 125
Trickled in silence thine own
Therefore the victor's heart
Broke on the field of his fame

Ah! as of old, from the pomp
Of Italian Milan, the fair 130
Flower of marble of white
Southern palaces—steps

Border'd by statues, and walks
Terraced, and orange-bowers
Heavy with fragrance—the blond 135
German Kaiser full oft

Long'd himself back to the fields,
Rivers, and high-roof'd towns
Of his native Germany, so,
So, how often! from hot 140

Paris drawing-rooms, and lamps
Blazing, and brilliant crowds,
Stair'd and jewell'd, of men
Famous, of women the queens
Of dazzling converse—from fumes 145

Of praise, hot, heady fumes, to the poor brain
That mount, that madden—how oft
Heine's spirit outworn
Long'd itself out of the din,
Back to the tranquil, the cool 150
Far German home of his youth!

145 1867-9 and fumes

HEINE'S GRAVE

See! in the May-afternoon, O'er the fiesh, short turf of the Hartz, A youth, with the foot of youth, Heine! thou climbest again!	155
Up, through the tall dark firs Warming their heads in the sun, Chequering the grass with their shade— Up, by the stream, with its huge Moss-hung boulders, and thin Musical water half-hid—	160
Up, o'er the rock-strewn slope, With the sinking sun, and the air Chill, and the shadows now Long on the grey hill-side— To the stone-roof'd hut at the top!	165
Or, yet later, in watch On the roof of the Brocken-tower Thou standest, gazing!—to see The broad red sun, over field, Forest, and city, and spire, And mist-track'd stream of the wide, Wide, German land, going down In a bank of vapours——again Standest, at nightfall, alone!	170 175
Or, next morning, with limbs Rested by slumber, and heart Freshen'd and light with the May, O'er the gracious spurs coming down Of the Lower Hartz, among oaks, And beechen coverts, and copse Of hazels green in whose depth Ilse, the fairy transform'd, In a thousand water-breaks light Pours her petulant youth— Climbing the rock which juts O'er the valley, the dizzily perch'd	180 185

HEINE'S GRAVE

Rock—to its iron cross
Once more thou cling'st, to the Cross
Clingest! with smiles, with a sigh! 190

Goethe, too, had been there ²⁴
In the long-past winter he came
To the frozen Hartz, with his soul
Passionate, eager—his youth
All in ferment!—but he 195
Destined to work and to live
Left it, and thou, alas!
Only to laugh and to die

But something prompts me Not thus
Take leave of Heine! not thus 200
Speak the last word at his grave!
Not in pity, and not
With half censure—with awe
Hail, as it passes from earth
Scattering lightnings, that soul! 205

The Spirit of the world,
Beholding the absurdity of men—
Their vaunts, their feats—let a sardonic smile,
For one short moment, wander o'er his lips
That smile was Heine!—for its earthly hour 210
The strange guest sparkled, now 'tis pass'd away

That was Heine! and we,
Myriads who live, who have lived,
What are we all, but a mood,
A single mood, of the life 215
Of the Spirit in whom we exist,
Who alone is all things in one?

Spirit, who fillest us all!
Spirit, who utterest in each
New-coming son of mankind 220

216 1867-9 the Being

HEINE'S GRAVE

Such of thy thoughts as thou wilt!
 O thou, one of whose moods,
 Bitter and strange, was the life
 Of Heine—his strange, alas,
 His bitter life!—may a life 225
 Other and milder be mine!
 May'st thou a mood more serene,
 Happier, have utter'd in mine!
 May'st thou the rapture of peace
 Deep have embreathed at its core, 230
 Made it a ray of thy thought,
 Made it a beat of thy joy!

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

[First published in FRASER'S MAGAZINE, April 1855 Reprinted 1867 and
 thereafter]

THROUGH Alpine meadows soft-suffused
 With rain, where thick the crocus blows,
 Past the dark forges long disused,
 The mule-track from Saint Laurent goes
 The bridge is cross'd, and slow we ride, 5
 Through forest, up the mountain-side
 The autumnal evening darkens round,
 The wind is up, and drives the rain,
 While, hark! far down, with strangled sound
 Doth the Dead Guier's stream complain, 10
 Where that wet smoke, among the woods,
 Over his boiling cauldron broods
 Swift rush the spectral vapours white
 Past limestone scars with ragged pines,
 Showing—then blotting from our sight!— 15
 Halt—through the cloud-drift something shines!
 High in the valley, wet and drear,
 The huts of Courrierie appear

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE 12 Fraser 1855 cauldrons
 13 Fraser 1855 Fast rush

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

Strike leftward! cries our guide, and higher
Mounts up the stony forest-way 20
At last the encircling trees retire,
Look! through the showery twilight grey
What pointed roofs are these advance?—
A palace of the Kings of France?

Approach, for what we seek is here! 25
Alight, and sparely sup, and wait
For rest in this outbuilding near,
Then cross the sward and reach that gate.
Knock, pass the wicket! Thou art come
To the Carthusians' world-famed home 30

The silent courts, where night and day
Into their stone-carved basins cold
The splashing icy fountains play—
The humid corridors behold!
Where, ghostlike in the deepening night, 35
Cowl'd forms brush by in gleaming white

The chapel, where no organ's peal
Invests the stern and naked prayer—
With penitential cries they kneel
And wrestle, rising then, with bare 40
And white uplifted faces stand,
Passing the Host from hand to hand,

Each takes, and then his visage wan
Is buried in his cowl once more
The cells!—the suffering Son of Man 45
Upon the wall—the knee-worn floor—
And where they sleep, that wooden bed,
Which shall their coffin be, when dead!

The library, where tract and tome
Not to feed priestly pride are there, 50
To hymn the conquering march of Rome,
Nor yet to amuse, as ours are!

52 1869 (*only*) as worldlings' are.

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

They pant of souls the inner strife,
Their drops of blood, their death in life

The garden, overgrown—yet mild, 55
See, fragrant herbs are flowering there!
Strong children of the Alpine wild
Whose culture is the brethren's care,
Of human tasks their only one,
And cheerful works beneath the sun 60

Those halls, too, destined to contain
Each its own pilgrim-host of old,
From England, Germany, or Spain—
All are before me! I behold
The House, the Brotherhood austere! 65
—And what am I, that I am here?

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith, and trimm'd its fire,
Show'd me the high, white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze, and there aspire 70
Even now their whispers pierce the gloom
What dost thou in this living tomb?

Forgive me, masters of the mind!
At whose behest I long ago
So much unlearn't, so much resign'd— 75
I come not here to be your foe!
I seek these anchorites, not in ruth,
To curse and to deny your truth,

Not as their friend, or child, I speak!
But as, on some far northern strand, 80
Thinking of his own Gods, a Greek
In pity and mournful awe might stand
Before some fallen Runic stone—
For both were faiths, and both are gone

56 *Fraser 1855-77* Those fragrant herbs 68 *Fraser 1855* prun'd
its faith and quench'd its fire 69 *Fraser 1855* the pale cold star

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
 The other powerless to be born,
 With nowhere yet to rest my head,
 Like these, on earth I wait forlorn
 Their faith, my tears, the world deride—
 I come to shed them at their side

Oh, hide me in your gloom profound,
 Ye solemn seats of holy pain!
 Take me, cowl'd forms, and fence me round,
 Till I possess my soul again,
 Till free my thoughts before me roll,
 Not chafed by hourly false control!

For the world cries your faith is now
 But a dead time's exploded dream,
 My melancholy, sciolists say,
 Is a pass'd mode, an outworn theme—
 As if the world had ever had
 A faith, or sciolists been sad!

Ah, if it *be* pass'd, take away,
 At least, the restlessness, the pain,
 Be man henceforth no more a prey
 To these out-dated stings again!
 The nobleness of grief is gone—
 Ah, leave us not the fret alone!

But—if you cannot give us ease—
 Last of the race of them who grieve
 Here leave us to die out with these
 Last of the people who believe!
 Silent, while years engrave the brow,
 Silent—the best are silent now

93 *Fraser 1855* Invest me, steep me, fold me round
 controul 99 *All editions during author's lifetime, the rhyme notwithstanding,*
read sciolists say, 101 *Fraser 1855* ever (*italics*) 108 *Fraser 1855*
 pang alone

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

Achilles ponders in his tent, 115
 The kings of modern thought are dumb,
 Silent they are, though not content,
 And wait to see the future come
 They have the grief men had of yore,
 But they contend and cry no more 120

Our fathers water'd with their tears
 This sea of time whereon we sail,
 Their voices were in all men's ears
 Who pass'd within their puissant hail
 Still the same ocean round us raves, 125
 But we stand mute, and watch the waves,

For what avail'd it, all the noise
 And outcry of the former men?—
 Say, have their sons achieved more joys,
 Say, is life lighter now than then? 130
 The sufferers died, they left their pain—
 The pangs which tortured them remain

What helps it now, that Byron bore,
 With haughty scorn which mock'd the smart,
 Through Europe to the Ætolian shore 135
 The pageant of his bleeding heart?
 That thousands counted every groan,
 And Europe made his woe her own?

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze
 Carried thy lovely wail away, 140
 Musical through Italian trees
 Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?
 Inheritors of thy distress
 Have restless hearts one thro' the less?

121 *Fraser 1855* Their fathers 126 *Fraser 1855* they stand
 129 1867-9 sons obtain'd 142 *Fraser 1855-68* That fringe *Fraser*
 1855 thy dark blue

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

Or are we easier, to have read, 145
 O Obermann! the sad, stern page,
 Which tells us how thou hidd'st thy head
 From the fierce tempest of thine age
 In the lone brakes of Fontainebleau,
 Or chalets near the Alpine snow^a 150

Ye slumber in your silent grave!—
 The world, which for an idle day
 Grace to your mood of sadness gave,
 Long since hath flung her weeds away
 The eternal trifier breaks your spell, 155
 But we—we learnt your lore too well!

Years hence, perhaps, may dawn an age,
 More fortunate, alas! than we,
 Which without hardness will be sage,
 And gay without frivolity 160
 Sons of the world, oh, speed those years,
 But, while we wait, allow our tears!

Allow them! We admire with awe
 The exulting thunder of your race,
 You give the universe your law, 165
 You triumph over time and space!
 Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
 We laud them, but they are not ours

We are like children rear'd in shade
 Beneath some old-world abbey wall, 170
 Forgotten in a forest-glade,

151 *Fraser 1855* They slumber in their silent grave. 153 *Fraser*
 1855 to their mood 154 *Fraser 1855* hath thrown
 155 *Fraser 1855* breaks their spell 156 *Fraser 1855* their lore
 157 *Fraser 1855-68* There may, perhaps, yet dawn an age, 1869 There
 yet, perhaps, may dawn an age, 161 *Fraser 1855-69* oh, haste those
 years 162 *Fraser 1855-69* But, till they rise, 168 *Fraser*
 1855 They awe us, but they 1867-9 We mark them, but they
 1877-81 We praise them, but they

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

And secret from the eyes of all
 Deep, deep the greenwood round them waves,
 Their abbey, and its close of graves!

But, where the road runs near the stream, 175
 Oft through the trees they catch a glance
 Of passing troops in the sun's beam—
 Pennon, and plume, and flashing lance!
 Forth to the world those soldiers fare,
 To life, to cities, and to war! 180

And through the wood, another way,
 Faint bugle-notes from far are borne,
 Where hunters gather, staghounds bay,
 Round some fair forest-lodge at morn
 Gay dames are there, in sylvan green, 185
 Laughter and cries—those notes between!

The banners flashing through the trees
 Make their blood dance and chain their eyes,
 That bugle-music on the breeze
 Arrests them with a charm'd surprise 190
 Banner by turns and bugle woo
Ye shy recluses, follow too!

O children, what do ye reply?—
 'Action and pleasure, will ye roam
 Through these secluded dells to cry 195
 And call us?—but too late ye come!
 Too late for us your call ye blow,
 Whose bent was taken long ago

'Long since we pace this shadow'd nave,
 We watch those yellow tapers shine, 200
 Emblems of hope over the grave,

179 *Fraser 1855* to the mighty world they fare, 181 *Fraser*
 1855-81 the woods, 184 *Fraser 1855-81* old forest-lodge
 194-210 *Fraser 1855 italics* 201 *Fraser 1855 light above the grave,*

STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

In the high altar's depth divine,
 The organ carries to our ear
 Its accents of another sphere
 'Fenced early in this cloistral round 205
 Of reverie, of shade, of prayer,
 How should we grow in other ground?
 How can we flower in foreign air?
 —Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease,
 And leave our desert to its peace! 210

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE AUTHOR OF 'OBERMANN'²⁵

NOVEMBER, 1849

[First published 1852 Reprinted 1855, '69, and thereafter]

In front the awful Alpine track
 Crawls up its rocky stair,
 The autumn storm-winds drive the rack,
 Close o'er it, in the air
 Behind are the abandon'd baths²⁶ 5
 Mute in their meadows lone,
 The leaves are on the valley-paths,
 The mists are on the Rhone—
 The white mists rolling like a sea!
 I hear the torrents roar 10
 —Yes, Obermann, all speaks of thee,
 I feel thee near once more!
 I turn thy leaves! I feel their breath
 Once more upon me roll,
 That air of languor, cold, and death, 15
 Which brooded o'er thy soul

208 Fraser 1855-69 should we
 to its peace

210 Fraser 1855 leave our forest

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE AUTHOR OF 'OBERMANN' Title 1855 (only)
 Obermann Date added in 1877

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE AUTHOR OF 'OBERMANN'

Fly hence, poor wretch, whoe'er thou art,
 Condemn'd to cast about,
 All shipwreck in thy own weak heart,
 For comfort from without! 20

A fever in these pages burns
 Beneath the calm they feign,
 A wounded human spirit turns,
 Here, on its bed of pain

Yes, though the virgin mountain-air 25
 Fresh through these pages blows,
 Though to these leaves the glaciers spare
 The soul of their white snows,

Though here a mountain-murmur swells
 Of many a dark-bough'd pine, 30
 Though, as you read, you hear the bells
 Of the high-pasturing kine—

Yet, through the hum of torrent lone,
 And brooding mountain-bee,
 There sobs I know not what ground-tone 35
 Of human agony

Is it for this, because the sound
 Is fraught too deep with pain,
 That, Obermann! the world around
 So little loves thy strain? 40

Some secrets may the poet tell,
 For the world loves new ways,
 To tell too deep ones is not well—
 It knows not what he says

Yet, of the spirits who have reign'd 45
 In this our troubled day, •
 I know but two, who have attain'd,
 Save thee, to see their way

28 1852, 1881 mute snows

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE

By England's lakes, in grey old age,
His quiet home one keeps, 50
And one, the strong much-toiling sage,
In German Weimar sleeps

But Wordsworth's eyes avert their ken
From half of human fate,
And Goethe's course few sons of men 55
May think to emulate

For he pursued a lonely road,
His eyes on Nature's plan,
Neither made man too much a God,
Nor God too much a man 60

Strong was he, with a spirit free
From mists, and sane, and clear,
Clearer, how much! than ours—yet we
Have a worse course to steer

For though his manhood bore the blast 65
Of a tremendous time,
Yet in a tranquil world was pass'd
His tenderer youthful prime

But we, brought forth and rear'd in hours
Of change, alarm, surprise— 70
What shelter to grow ripe is ours?
What leisure to grow wise?

Like children bathing on the shore,
Buried a wave beneath,
The second wave succeeds, before 75
We have had time to breathe

Too fast we live, too much are tried,
Too harass'd, to attain
Wordsworth's sweet calm, or Goethe's wide
And luminous view to gain 80

66 1855 (*only*) Of Europe's stormiest time,

AUTHOR OF 'OBERMANN'

And then we turn, thou sadder sage,
To thee! we feel thy spell!
—The hopeless tangle of our age,
Thou too hast scann'd it well!

Immoveable thou sittest, still 85
As death, composed to bear!
Thy head is clear, thy feeling chill,
And icy thy despair

Yes, as the son of Theus said,
I hear thee saying now 90
Greater by far than thou art dead,
Strive not! die also thou!

Ah! two desires toss about
The poet's feverish blood
One drives him to the world without, 95
And one to solitude

The glow, he cries, the thrill of life,
Where, where do these abound?—
Not in the world, not in the strife
Of men, shall they be found 100

He who hath watch'd, not shared, the strife,
Knows how the day hath gone
He only lives with the world's life,
Who hath renounced his own

To thee we come, then! Clouds are roll'd 105
Where thou, O seer! art set,
Thy realm of thought is drear and cold—
The world is colder yet!

And thou hast pleasures, too, to share
With those who come to thee— 110
Balms floating on thy mountain-air,
And healing sights to see

90 1852-77 One hears thee 91 1885-90 than thou art dead [sic]
97 1852 The glow of thought, the thrill of life 97-8 1852 not italicized

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE

How often, where the slopes are green
On Jaman, hast thou sate
By some high chalet-door, and seen 115
The summer-day grow late,

And darkness steal o'er the wet grass
With the pale crocus starr'd,
And reach that glimmering sheet of glass
Beneath the piny sward, 120

Lake Leman's waters, far below!
And watch'd the rosy light
Fade from the distant peaks of snow,
And on the air of night

Heard accents of the eternal tongue 125
Through the pine branches play—
Listen'd, and felt thyself grow young!
Listen'd and wept—Away!

Away the dreams that but deceive
And thou, sad guide, adieu! 130
I go, fate drives me, but I leave
Half of my life with you

We, in some unknown Power's employ,
Move on a rigorous line,
Can neither, when we will, enjoy, 135
Nor, when we will, resign

I in the world must live, but thou,
Thou melancholy shade!
Wilt not, if thou canst see me now,
Condemn me, nor upbraid 140

For thou art gone away from earth,
And place with those dost claim,
The Children of the Second Birth,
Whom the world could not tame,

AUTHOR OF 'OBERMANN'

- And with that small, transfigured band, 145
Whom many a different way
Conducted to their common land,
Thou learn'st to think as they
- Christian and pagan, king and slave,
Soldier and anchorite, 150
Distinctions we esteem so grave,
Are nothing in their sight
- They do not ask, who pined unseen,
Who was on action hurl'd,
Whose one bond is, that all have been 155
Unspotted by the world
- There without anger thou wilt see
Him who obeys thy spell
No more, so he but rest, like thee,
Unsoil'd!—and so, farewell 160
- Farewell!—Whether thou now liest near
That much-loved inland sea,
The ripples of whose blue waves cheer
Vevey and Meillerie
- And in that gracious region bland, 165
Where with clear-rustling wave
The scented pines of Switzerland
Stand dark round thy green grave,
- Between the dusty vineyard-walls
Issuing on that green place 170
The early peasant still recalls
The pensive stranger's face,
- And stoops to clear thy moss-grown date
Ere he plods on again,—
Or whether, by maligner fate, 175
Among the swarms of men,

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF AUTHOR OF 'OBERMANN'

Where between granite terraces
The blue Seine rolls her wave,
The Capital of Pleasure sees
The hardly-heard-of grave,— 180

Farewell! Under the sky we part,
In this stern Alpine dell
O unstrung will! O broken heart!
A last, a last farewell!

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

(COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER THE PRECEDING)

[First published 1867 Reprinted 1868 and thereafter]

Savez-vous quelque bien qui console du regret d'un monde? OBERMANN

GLION?—Ah, twenty years, it cuts²⁷
All meaning from a name!
White houses prank where once were huts
Glion, but not the same!

And yet I know not! All unchanged 5
The turf, the pines, the sky!
The hills in their old order ranged,
The lake, with Chillon by!

And, 'neath those chestnut-trees, where stiff 10
And stony mounts the way,
The crackling husk-heaps burn, as if
I left them yesterday!

Across the valley, on that slope,
The huts of Avant shine! 15
Its pines, under their branches, ope
Ways for the pasturing kine

178 1852 The Seine conducts her wave, 180 1852-77 Thy hardly
heard of grave—

OBERMANN ONCE MORE Second line of title added in 1869 11 1867-
9 Their crackling 16 1867-9 tinkling kine

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

Full-foaming milk-pails, Alpine fare,
Sweet heaps of fresh-cut grass,
Invite to rest the traveller there
Before he climb the pass— 20

The gentian-flower'd pass, its crown
With yellow spires aflame,²⁸
Whence drops the path to Allière down,
And walls where Byron came,²⁹

By their green river, who doth change 25
His birth-name just below,
Orchard, and croft, and full-stored grange
Nursed by his pastoral flow

But stop!—to fetch back thoughts that stray
Beyond this gracious bound, 30
The cone of Jaman, pale and grey,
See, in the blue profound!

Ah, Jaman! delicately tall
Above his sun-warm'd firs—
What thoughts to me his rocks recall, 35
What memories he stirs!

And who but thou must be, in truth,
Obermann! with me here?
Thou master of my wandering youth,
But left this many a year! 40

Yes, I forget the world's work wrought,
Its warfare waged with pain,
An eremite with thee, in thought
Once more I slip my chain,

And to thy mountain-châlet come, 45
And lie beside its door,
And hear the wild bee's Alpine hum,
And thy sad, tranquil lore!

Again I feel the words inspire
Their mournful calm, serene,
Yet tinged with infinite desire
For all that *might* have been—

The harmony from which man swerved
Made his life's rule once more!
The universal order served,
Earth happier than before!

—While thus I mused, night gently ran
Down over hill and wood
Then, still and sudden, Obermann
On the grass near me stood

Those pensive features well I knew,
On my mind, years before,
Imaged so oft! imaged so true!
—A shepherd's garb he wore,

A mountain-flower was in his hand,
A book was in his breast
Bent on my face, with gaze which spann'd
My soul, his eyes did rest

'And is it thou,' he cried, 'so long
Held by the world which we
Loved not, who turnest from the throng
Back to thy youth and me?'

'And from thy world, with heart oppress,
Choosest thou *now* to turn?—
Ah me! we anchorites read things best,
Clearest their course discern! 75

67 1867-8 that scann'd
we anchorites knew it best!
Best can its course discern!

75, 76 : 867-9

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'Thou fledst me when the ungenial earth,
Man's work-place, lay in gloom
Return'st thou in her hour of birth,
Of hopes and hearts in bloom' 80

'Percerv'st thou not the change of day'
Ah! Carry back thy ken,
What, some two thousand years! Survey
The world as it was then!

'Like ours it look'd in outward air 85
Its head was clear and true,
Sumptuous its clothing, rich its fare,
No pause its action knew,

'Stout was its arm, each thew and bone
Seem'd puissant and alive— 90
But, ah! its heart, its heart was stone,
And so it could not thrive!

'On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell
Deep weariness and sated lust 95
Made human life a hell

'In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay,
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian way 100

77 1867-77 fledd'st

77, 78 1867-9 when the ungenial earth

81-4 1867-9 Thou soughtest,
Wellnigh two thousand years have brought
Their load, and gone away,
Since last on earth there lived and wrought
A world like ours to-day

after 84 1868, 1869 insert Like ours it look'd in outward air—

But of that inward-prize,
Soul, that than they we take more care,
Ah, there our future lies

In 1869 the third line of this stanza was changed to read Soul, that we take more
count and care, 89 1867, 1868 pulse and bone

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crown'd his hair with flowers—
No easier nor no quicker pass'd
The impracticable hours

'The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world
The Roman tempest swell'd and swell'd,
And on her head was hurl'd 105

'The East bow'd low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain,
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again 110

'So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit grey,
A conquering, new-born joy awoke,
And fill'd her life with day 115

'“Poor world,” she cried, “so deep accurst,
That runn'st from pole to pole
To seek a draught to slake thy thirst—
Go, seek it in thy soul!” 120

'She heard it, the victorious West,
In crown and sword array'd!
She felt the void which mined her breast,
She shiver'd and obey'd

'She veil'd her eagles, snapp'd her sword,
And laid her sceptre down,
Her stately purple she abhorr'd,
And her imperial crown 125

'She broke her flutes, she stopp'd her sports,
Her artists could not please,
She tore her books, she shut her courts,
She fled her palaces, 130

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'Lust of the eye and pride of life
She left it all behind,
And hurried, torn with inward strife, 135
The wilderness to find

'Tears wash'd the trouble from her face!
She changed into a child!
'Mid weeds and wrecks she stood—a place
Of ruin—but she smiled! 140

'Oh, had I lived in that great day,
How had its glory new
Fill'd earth and heaven, and caught away
My ravish'd spirit too!

'No thoughts that to the world belong 145
Had stood against the wave
Of love which set so deep and strong
From Christ's then open grave

'No cloister-floor of humid stone
Had been too cold for me 150
For me no Eastern desert lone
Had been too far to flee

'No lonely life had pass'd too slow,
When I could hourly scan
Upon his Cross, with head sunk low, 155
That nail'd, thorn-crowned Man!

'Could see the Mother with her Child
Whose tender winning arts
Have to his little arms beguiled
So many wounded hearts! 160

145-8 1867-9 follow lines 149-52
stanza read as follows

153-6 From 1867 to 1869 this

No lonely life had pass'd too slow
When I could hourly see
That wan, nail'd Form, with head droop'd low,
Upon the bitter tree,

157 1867-8: the Child

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'And centuries came and ran their course,
And unspent all that time
Still, still went forth that Child's dear force,
And still was at its prime

'Ay, ages long endured his span 165
Of life—'tis true received—
That gracious Child, that thorn-crown'd Man!
—He lived while we believed

'While we believed, on earth he went,
And open stood his grave 170
Men call'd from chamber, church, and tent,
And Christ was by to save

'Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town,
And on his grave, with shining eyes, 175
The Syrian stars look down

'In vain men still, with hoping new,
Regard his death-place dumb,
And say the stone is not yet to,
And wait for words to come 180

'Ah, o'er that silent sacred land,
Of sun, and arid stone,
And crumbling wall, and sultry sand,
Sounds now one word alone!

<p>181 1867-81 from 1867 to 1881 appeared</p>	<p>184 1867-81 1881</p>	<p>Comes now After 184</p>
<p>'Ah, from 'From David's lips this word did roll, 'Tis true and loving yet <i>No man can save his brother's soul, Nor pay his brother's debt</i> In 1877 and 1881 the first line of the quatrain read From David's lips that word did roll.</p>		

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'Unduped of fancy, henceforth man
Must labour '—must resign
His all too human creeds, and scan
Simply the way divine!

185

'But slow that tide of common thought,
Which bathed our life, retired,
Slow, slow the old world wore to nought,
And pulse by pulse expired

190

'Its frame yet stood without a breach
When blood and warmth were fled,
And still it spake its wonted speech—
But every word was dead

195

'And oh, we cried, that on this corse
Might fall a freshening storm!
Rive its dry bones, and with new force
A new-sprung world inform!

200

'—Down came the storm! O'er France it pass'd
In sheets of scathing fire,
All Europe felt that fiery blast,
And shook as it rush'd by her

'Down came the storm! In ruins fell
The worn-out world we knew
It pass'd, that elemental swell!
Again appear'd the blue,

205

'The sun shone in the new-wash'd sky,
And what from heaven saw he?
Blocks of the past, like icebergs high,
Float on a rolling sea!

210

185 1867-81 Alone, self-poised, henceforward man *This reading survived until the final revision of the text, when, for the first time, the stanza was italicized, as constituting the 'word' which sounds over Syria.*

185 1881 MS alterations [cancelled]

Unled of fancy, henceforth man

Self-poised, clear-minded, henceforth man

201-4 Added in 1868

205 1867 In ruin

206 1867-9 out-

worn world

212 1867 Float in

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'Upon them plies the race of man
All it before endeavour'd,
'Ye live," I cried, "ye work and plan, 215
And know not ye are sever'd'

' "Poor fragments of a broken world
Whereon men pitch their tent!
Why were ye too to death not hurl'd
When your world's day was spent' 220

' "That glow of central fire is done
Which with its fusing flame
Knit all your parts, and kept you one—
But ye, ye are the same'

' "The past, its mask of union on, 225
Had ceased to live and thrive
The past, its mask of union gone,
Say, is it more alive'

' "Your creeds are dead, your rites are dead,
Your social order too! 230
Where tarries he, the Power who said
See, I make all things new'

' "The millions suffer still, and grieve,
And what can helpers heal
With old-world cures men half believe 235
For woes they wholly feel'

' "And yet men have such need of joy!
But joy whose grounds are true,
And joy that should all hearts employ
As when the past was new 240

213-16 1867-9

Upon them ply the race of man
All they before endeavour'd,
They come and go, they work and plan,
And know not they are sever'd.

218 1867-9 we pitch our tent!

221 1867, 1868 The glow

237 1867-9 yet they have

238 1867-9 And joy

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

"Ah, not the emotion of that past,
 Its common hope, were vain!
 Some new such hope must dawn at last,
 Or man must toss in pain
 "But now the old is out of date, 245
 The new is not yet born,
 And who can be *alone* elate,
 While the world lies forlorn?"
 "Then to the wilderness I fled —
 There among Alpine snows 250
 And pastoral huts I hid my head,
 And sought and found repose
 'It was not yet the appointed hour
 Sad, patient, and resign'd,
 I watch'd the crocus fade and flower, 255
 I felt the sun and wind
 "The day I lived in was not mine,
 Man gets no second day
 In dreams I saw the future shine—
 But ah! I could not stay! 260
 'Action I had not, followers, fame,
 I pass'd obscure, alone
 The after-world forgets my name,
 Nor do I wish it known.
 'Composed to bear, I lived and died, 265
 And knew my life was vain,
 With fate I murmur not, nor chide,
 At Sèvres by the Seine
 '(If Paris that brief flight allow)
 My humble tomb explore! 270
 It bears *Eternity, be thou*
My refuge! and no more

243 1867-9 A new
 future not yet born—
 and died,

245 1867-9 the past 246 1867-9 The
 265 1867-9 'Gloom-wrapped within, I lived

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'But thou, whom fellowship of mood
Did make from haunts of strife
Come to my mountain-solitude,
And learn my frustrate life,

275

'O thou, who, ere thy flying span
Was past of cheerful youth,
Didst find the solitary man
And love his cheerless truth—

280

'Despair not thou as I despair'd,
Nor be cold gloom thy prison'
Forward the gracious hours have fared,
And see! the sun is risen!

'He breaks the winter of the past,
A green, new earth appears
Millions, whose life in ice lay fast,
Have thoughts, and smiles, and tears

285

'What though there still need effort, strife?
Though much be still unwon'
Yet warm it mounts, the hour of life!
Death's frozen hour is done!

290

'The world's great order dawns in sheen,
After long darkness rude,
Divinelier imaged, clearer seen,
With happier zeal pursued

295

'With hope extinct and brow composed
I mark'd the present die,
Its term of life was nearly closed,
Yet it had more than I.

300

'But thou, though to the world's new hour
Thou come with aspect marr'd,
Shorn of the joy, the bloom, the power
Which best befits its bard—

279 1867-9 Didst seek 285 1867-9 'He melts the icebergs of the
past, 289-92 Added in 1877 304 1867-9 best beseem

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'Though more than half thy years be past, 305
And spent thy youthful prime,
Though, round thy firmer manhood cast,
Hang weeds of our sad time

'Whereof thy youth felt all the spell,
And traversed all the shade— 310
Though late, though dimm'd, though weak, yet tell
Hope to a world new-made!

'Help it to fill that deep desire,
The want which rack'd our brain,
Consumed our heart with thirst like fire, 315
Immedicable pain,

'Which to the wilderness drove out
Our life, to Alpine snow,
And palsied all our word with doubt,
And all our work with woe— 320

'What still of strength is left, employ
That end to help attain
One common wave of thought and joy
Lifting mankind again!

—The vision ended I awoke 325
As out of sleep, and no
Voice moved,—only the torrent broke
The silence, far below

Soft darkness on the turf did lie
Solemn, o'er hut and wood, 330
In the yet star-sown nightly sky,
The peak of Jaman stood

312 1869 world re-made!	313 1867-9 reach our deep desire,
314 1867-9 dream which fill'd our brain,	1877-81 want which crazed
our brain, 1881 <i>MS alterations [cancelled]</i>	want which wore our brain,
315 1867-9 Fix'd in our soul a thirst	1877-81 Consum'd our soul
with thirst 319 1867-9 our deed	320 1867-9 our word
322 1867-9 That end to help men gain	1877-81 This end to help
attain 323 1867-9 <i>mighty wave</i>	324 1867-9 <i>mankind</i>
<i>again!</i>	

OBERMANN ONCE MORE

Still in my soul the voice I heard
Of Obermann!—away
I turned, by some vague impulse stirr'd, 335
Along the rocks of Naye

Past Sonchaud's piny flanks I gaze
And the blanch'd summit bare
Of Malatrait, to where in haze
The Valais opens fair, 340

And the domed Velan, with his snows,
Behind the upcrowding hills,
Doth all the heavenly opening close
Which the Rhone's murmur fills,—

And glorious there, without a sound, 345
Across the glimmering lake,
High in the Valais-depth profound,
I saw the morning break

337 1867-9 And Sonchaud's

DRAMATIC POEMS

MEROPE

A TRAGEDY

[First published 1858 Reprinted 1885 and thereafter]

STORY OF THE DRAMA

Apollodorus says — 'Cresphontes had not reigned long in Messenia when he was murdered, together with two of his sons And Polyphontes reigned in his stead, he, too, being of the family of Hercules, and he had for his wife, against her will, Merope, the widow of the murdered king But Merope had borne to Cresphontes a third son, 5 called Æpytus, him she gave to her own father to bring up He, when he came to man's estate, returned secretly to Messenia, and slew Polyphontes and the other murderers of his father'

Hyginus says — 'Merope sent away and concealed her infant son Polyphontes sought for him everywhere in vain He, when he grew up, 10 laid a plan to avenge the murder of his father and brothers In pursuance of this plan he came to king Polyphontes and reported the death of the son of Cresphontes and Merope The king ordered him to be hospitably entertained, intending to inquire further of him He, being very tired, went to sleep, and an old man, who was the channel through 15 whom the mother and son used to communicate, arrives at this moment in tears, bringing word to Merope that her son had disappeared from his protector's house, and was slain Merope, believing that the sleeping stranger is the murderer of her son, comes into the guest-chamber with an axe, not knowing that he whom she would slay was her son, 20

MEROPE STORY OF THE DRAMA *In 1858 this is called an 'Historical Introduction', following the Preface to that edition The Introduction opens*

In the foregoing Preface [*note refers to Page xii of the Preface*] the story of Merope is detailed what is here added may serve to explain allusions which occur in the course of the tragedy, and to illustrate the situation of its chief personages at the moment when it commences

On pp xiii and xiv of 1858 occur the passages from Apollodorus and Hyginus, with these differences

Hyginus

10 1858 for him everywhere, and promised gold to whoever should slay him
12 1858 and asked for the promised gold, saying that he had slain the son
18 and was slain *first inserted in 1885*

MEROPE

the old man recognised him, and withheld Merope from slaying him
The king, Polyphontes, rejoicing at the supposed death of Æpytus,
celebrated a sacrifice, his guest, pretending to strike the sacrificial
victim, slew the king, and so got back his father's kingdom'

- 25 The events on which the action of the drama turns belong to the
period of transition from the heroic and fabulous to the human and
historic age of Greece The doings of the hero Hercules, the ancestor of
the Messenian Æpytus, belong to fable, but the invasion of Pelopon-
nesus by the Dorians under chiefs claiming to be descended from
30 Hercules, and their settlement in Argos, Lacedæmon, and Messenia,
belong to history Æpytus is descended on the father's side from Her-
cules, Perseus, and the kings of Argos, on the mother's side from
Pelagus, and the aboriginal kings of Arcadia Callisto, the daughter of
the wicked Lycaon, and the mother, by Zeus, of Arcas, from whom the
35 Arcadians took their name, was the granddaughter of Pelagus The
birth of Arcas brought upon Callisto the anger of the virgin-goddess
Artemus, whose service she followed she was changed into a she-bear,
and in this form was chased by her own son, grown to manhood Zeus
interposed, and the mother and son were removed from the earth, and
40 placed among the stars Callisto became the famous constellation of
the Great Bear, her son became Arcturus, Arctophylax, or Boötes
From this son of Callisto were descended Cypselus, the maternal grand-
father of Æpytus, and the children of Cypselus, Laïas and Merope

- The story of the life of Hercules, the paternal ancestor of Æpytus, is
45 so well known that there is no need to record it The reader will
remember that, although entitled to the throne of Argos by right of
descent from Perseus and Danaus, and to the thrones of Sparta and
Messenia by right of conquest, Hercules yet passed his life in labours
and wanderings, subjected by the decree of fate to the commands of
50 his kinsman, the feeble and malignant Eurystheus At his death he

21 *After sentence ending* from slaying him, 1858 *has* After the recognition
had taken place, Merope, to prepare the way for her vengeance, affected to be
reconciled with Polyphontes 22 1858 king, overjoyed, celebrated
a sacrifice 25 of the drama *first inserted in* 1885 27 doings of

the *first inserted in* 1885 38 1858 At the critical moment Zeus inter-
posed, 42 1858 From him, Cypselus 43 1858 and Merope,
were lineally descended 44 1858 The events of the life are so
45 1858 that it is hardly necessary to record them. 45 1858 It is
sufficient to remind the reader, that 48 1858 he yet passed 49
1858 of his far inferior kinsman, 50 *After sentence ending* malignant
Eurystheus, 1858 *has* Hercules, who is represented with the violence as well

MEROPE

bequeathed to his offspring, the Heracleidæ, his own claims to the kingdoms of Peloponnesus, and to the persecution of Eurystheus. They at first sought shelter with Ceyx, king of Trachis, he was too weak to protect them, and they then took refuge at Athens. The Athenians refused to deliver them up at the demand of Eurystheus, he invaded 55 Attica, and a battle was fought near Marathon, in which, after Macaria, a daughter of Hercules, had devoted herself for the preservation of her house, Eurystheus fell, and the Heracleidæ and their Athenian protectors were victorious. The memory of Macaria's self-sacrifice was perpetuated by the name of a spring of water on the plain of Marathon, 60 the spring Macaria. The Heracleidæ then endeavoured to effect their return to Peloponnesus. Hyllus, the eldest of them, inquired of the oracle at Delphi respecting their return, he was told to return by the *narrow passage* and in the *third harvest*. Accordingly, in the third year from that time Hyllus led an army to the Isthmus of Corinth, but there 65 he was encountered by an army of Achæans and Arcadians, and fell in single combat with Echemus, king of Tegea. Upon this defeat the Heracleidæ retired to northern Greece, there, after much wandering, they finally took refuge with Ægimius, king of the Dorians, who appears to have been the fastest friend of their house, and whose Dorian warriors 70 formed the army which at last achieved their return. But, for a hundred years from the date of their first attempt, the Heracleidæ were defeated

as the virtues of an adventurous ever-warring hero, attacked and slew Eurytus, an Euboean king, with whom he had a quarrel, and carried off the daughter of Eurytus, the beautiful Iole. The wife of Hercules, Deianeira, seized with jealous anxiety, remembered that long ago the centaur Nessus, dying by the poisoned arrows of Hercules, had assured her that the blood flowing from his mortal wound would prove an infallible love-charm to win back the affections of her husband, if she should ever lose them. With this philtre Deianeira now anointed a robe of triumph, which she sent to her victorious husband. He received it when about to offer public sacrifice, and immediately put it on, but the sun's rays called into activity the poisoned blood with which the robe was smeared. It clung to the flesh of the hero and consumed it. In dreadful agonies Hercules caused himself to be transported from Euboea to Mount Æta there, under the crags of Trachis, an immense funeral pile was constructed. Recognizing the divine will in the fate which had overtaken him, the hero ascended the pile, and called on his children and followers to set it on fire. They refused, but the office was performed by Poeas, the father of Philoctetes, who, passing near, was attracted by the concourse round the pile, and who received the bow and arrows of Hercules for his reward. The flames arose, and the apotheosis of Hercules was consummated. 1858 does not have At his death

MEROPE

in their successive invasions of Peloponnesus Cleolaus and Aristomachus, the son and grandson of Hyllus, fell in unsuccessful expeditions At length the sons of Aristomachus, Temenus, Cresphontes, and Aristodemus, when grown up, repaired to Delphi and taxed the oracle with the non-fulfilment of the promise made to their ancestor Hyllus But Apollo replied that his oracle had been misunderstood, for that by the *third harvest* he had meant the third generation, and by the
 75 narrow passage he had meant the straits of the Corinthian Gulf After this explanation the sons of Aristomachus built a fleet at Naupactus, and finally, in the hundredth year from the death of Hyllus and the eightieth from the fall of Troy, the invasion was again attempted and was this time successful The son of Orestes, Tisamenus, who ruled
 80 both Argos and Lacedæmon, fell in battle, many of his vanquished subjects left their homes and took refuge in Achaia

The spoil was now to be divided among the conquerors Aristodemus, the youngest of the sons of Aristomachus, did not survive to enjoy his share He was slain at Delphi by the sons of Pylades and
 90 Electra, the kinsmen, through their mother, of the house of Agamemnon, that house which the Heracleidæ with their Dorian army had dispossessed The claims of Aristodemus descended to his two sons, Procles and Eurysthenes, children under the guardianship of their maternal uncle, Theras Temenus, the eldest of the sons of Aristomachus, took the kingdom of Argos For the two remaining kingdoms,
 95 that of Sparta and that of Messenia, his two nephews, who were to rule jointly, and their uncle Cresphontes, had to cast lots Cresphontes wished to have the fertile Messenia, and induced his brother to acquiesce in a trick which secured it to him The lot of Cresphontes and that of
 100 his two nephews were to be placed in a water-jar, and thrown out Messenia was to belong to him whose lot came out first With the connivance of Temenus, Cresphontes marked as his own lot a pellet composed of baked clay, as the lot of his nephews, a pellet of unbaked clay, the unbaked pellet was of course dissolved in the water, while the
 105 brick pellet fell out alone Messenia, therefore, was assigned to Cresphontes

Messenia was at this time ruled by Melanthus, a descendant of Neleus This ancestor, a prince of the great house of Æolus, had come from Thessaly and succeeded to the Messenian throne on the failure of the

86 1858 and retired to Achaia.
 the house of Agamemnon—
 were to cast

90-1 1858 the kinsmen of the
 91 had first inserted in 1885 97 1858

MEROPE

previous dynasty Melanthus and his race were thus foreigners in 110 Messenia and were unpopular His subjects offered little or no opposition to the invading Dorians, Melanthus abandoned his kingdom to Cresphontes, and retired to Athens

Cresphontes married Merope, whose native country, Arcadia, was not affected by the Dorian invasion This marriage, the issue of which 115 was three sons, connected him with the native population of Peloponnesus He built a new capital of Messenia, Stenyclaros, and transferred thither, from Pylos, the seat of government, he proposed, moreover, says Pausanias, to divide Messenia into five states, and to confer on the native Messenians equal privileges with their Dorian conquerors The 120 Dorians complained that his administration unduly favoured the vanquished people, his chief magnates, headed by Polyphontes, himself a descendant of Hercules, formed a cabal against him, and he was slain with his two eldest sons The youngest son of Cresphontes, Æpytus, then an infant, was saved by his mother, who sent him to her father, 125 Cypselus, the king of Arcadia, under whose protection he was brought up

The drama begins at the moment when Æpytus, grown to manhood, returns secretly to Messenia to take vengeance on his father's murderers At this period Temenus was no longer reigning at Argos, he had been 130 murdered by his sons, jealous of their brother-in-law, Deiphontes The sons of Aristodemus, Procles and Eurysthenes, at variance with their uncle and ex-guardian, Theras, were reigning at Sparta

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

LAIAS, *uncle of ÆPYTUS, brother of MEROPE*

ÆPYTUS, *son of MEROPE and CRESPHONTES*

POLYPHONTES, *king of MESSENIA*

MEROPE, *widow of CRESPHONTES, the murdered king of MESSENIA.*

THE CHORUS, *of MESSENIAN maidens*

ARCAS, *an old man of MEROPE'S household*

MESSENGER.

GUARDS, ATTENDANTS, &c.

The Scene is before the royal palace in STENYCLAROS, the capital of MESSENIA In the foreground is the tomb of CRESPHONTES The action commences at day-break

118-19 1858 he at first proposed, it is said by Pausanias, 133 1858 guardian, were reigning

MEROPE

LAIAS ÆPYTUS

Laias

SON of Cresphontes, we have reach'd the goal
 Of our night-journey, and thou see'st thy home
 Behold thy heritage, thy father's realm!
 This is that fruitful, famed Messenian land,
 Wealthy in corn and flocks, which, when at last 5
 The late-relenting Gods with victory brought
 The Heracleidæ back to Pelops' isle,
 Fell to thy father's lot, the second prize
 Before thy feet this recent city spreads
 Of Stenyclaros, which he built, and made 10
 Of his fresh-conquer'd realm the royal seat,
 Degrading Pylos from its ancient rule
 There stands the temple of thine ancestor,
 Great Heracles, and, in that public place,
 Zeus hath his altar, where thy father fell 15
 Southward and west, behold those snowy peaks,
 Taygetus, Laconia's border-wall,
 And, on this side, those confluent streams which make
 Pamisus watering the Messenian plain,
 Then to the north, Lycæus and the hills 20
 Of pastoral Arcadia, where, a babe
 Snatch'd from the slaughter of thy father's house,
 Thy mother's kin received thee, and rear'd up —
 Our journey is well made, the work remains
 Which to perform we made it, means for that 25
 Let us consult, before this palace sends
 Its inmates on their daily tasks abroad
 Haste and advise, for day comes on apace

Æpytus

O brother of my mother, guardian true,

14 and throughout 1858 Hercules 16 1858 Thence to the south,
 behold

MEROPE

And second father from that hour when first 30
 My mother's faithful servant laid me down,
 An infant, at the hearth of Cypselus,
 My grandfather, the good Arcadian king—
 Thy part it were to advise, and mine to obey
 But let us keep that purpose, which, at home, 35
 We judged the best, chance finds no better way
 Go thou into the city, and seek out
 Whate'er in the Messenian people stirs
 Of faithful fondness for their former king
 Or hatred to their present, in this last 40
 Will lie, my grandsire said, our fairest chance
 For tyrants make man good beyond himself,
 Hate to their rule, which else would die away,
 Their daily-practised chafings keep alive
 Seek this! revive, unite it, give it hope, 45
 Bid it rise boldly at the signal given
 Meanwhile within my father's palace I,
 An unknown guest, will enter, bringing word
 Of my own death—but, Laias, well I hope
 Through that pretended death to live and reign 50
 [THE CHORUS comes forth]

Softly, stand back!—see, to these palace gates
 What black procession slowly makes approach²—
 Sad-chanting maidens clad in mourning robes,
 With pitchers in their hands, and fresh-pull'd flowers—
 Doubtless, they bear them to my father's tomb 55
 [MEROPE comes forth]

And look, to meet them, that one, grief-plunged Form,
 Severer, paler, statelier than they all,
 A golden circlet on her queenly brow!
 O Laias, Laias, let the heart speak here—
 Shall I not greet her² shall I not leap forth² 60
 [POLYPHONTES comes forth, following MEROPE]

38 1858 Messenian city
 tow'rd the palace

39 1858 towards their
 56 1858 And see

51 1858

MEROPE

Laias

Not so! thy heart would pay its moment's speech
By silence ever after, for, behold!
The King (I know him, even through many years)
Follows the approaching Queen, who stops, as call'd
No lingering now! straight to the city I, 65
Do thou, till for thine entrance to this house
The happy moment comes, lurk here unseen
Behind the shelter of thy father's tomb,
Remove yet further off, if aught comes near
But, here while harbouring, on its margin lay, 70
Sole offering that thou hast, locks from thy head,
And fill thy leisure with an earnest prayer
To his avenging Shade, and to the Gods
Who under earth watch guilty deeds of men,
To guide our vengeance to a prosperous close 75
[LAIAS goes out POLYPHONTES, MEROPE, and THE
CHORUS come forward As they advance, ÆPYTUS,
who at first conceals himself behind the tomb, moves off
the stage

Polyphontes (To THE CHORUS)

Set down your pitchers, maidens, and fall back!
Suspend your melancholy rites awhile,
Shortly ye shall resume them with your Queen —

(To MEROPE)

I sought thee, Merope, I find thee thus,
As I have ever found thee, bent to keep, 80
By sad observances and public grief,
A mournful feud alive, which else would die
I blame thee not, I do thy heart no wrong!
Thy deep seclusion, thine unyielding gloom,
Thine attitude of cold, estranged reproach, 85
These punctual funeral honours, year by year

64 1858 issuing Queen

75 1858 our effort

MEROPE

Repeated, are in thee, I well believe,
 Courageous, faithful actions, nobly dared.
 But, Merope, the eyes of other men
 Read in these actions, innocent in thee, 90
 Perpetual promptings to rebellious hope,
 War-cries to faction, year by year renew'd,
 Beacons of vengeance, not to be let die
 And me, believe it, wise men gravely blame,
 And ignorant men despise me, that I stand 95
 Passive, permitting thee what course thou wilt.
 Yes, the crowd mutters that remorseful fear
 And paralysing conscience stop my arm,
 When it should pluck thee from thy hostile way
 All this I bear, for, what I seek, I know 100
 Peace, peace is what I seek, and public calm,
 Endless extinction of unhappy hates,
 Union cemented for this nation's weal
 And even now, if to behold me here,
 This day, amid these rites, this black-robed train, 105
 Wakens, O Queen! remembrance in thy heart
 Too wide at variance with the peace I seek—
 I will not violate thy noble grief,
 The prayer I came to urge I will defer

Merope

This day, to-morrow, yesterday, alike 110
 I am, I shall be, have been, in my mind
 Tow'rd thee, toward thy silence as thy speech.
 Speak, therefore, or keep silence, which thou wilt.

Polyphontes

Hear me, then, speak, and let this mournful day,
 The twentieth anniversary of strife, 115
 Henceforth be honour'd as the date of peace
 Yes, twenty years ago this day beheld
 The king Cresphontes, thy great husband, fall,

112 1858 Tow'rd thee, towards thy

MEROPE

It needs no yearly offerings at his tomb
 To keep alive that memory in my heart— 120
 It lives, and, while I see the light, will live
 For we were kinsmen—more than kinsmen—friends,
 Together we had grown, together lived,
 Together to this isle of Pelops came
 To take the inheritance of Heracles, 125
 Together won this fair Messenian land—
 Alas, that, how to rule it, was our broil!
 He had his counsel, party, friends—I mine,
 He stood by what he wish'd for—I the same,
 I smote him, when our wishes clash'd in arms— 130
 He had smit me, had he been swift as I
 But while I smote him, Queen, I honour'd him,
 Me, too, had he prevail'd, he had not scorn'd
 Enough of this! Since that, I have maintain'd
 The sceptre—not remissly let it fall— 135
 And I am seated on a prosperous throne,
 Yet still, for I conceal it not, ferments
 In the Messenian people what remains
 Of thy dead husband's faction—vigorous once,
 Now crush'd but not quite lifeless by his fall 140
 And these men look to thee, and from thy grief—
 Something too studiously, forgive me, shown—
 Infer thee their accomplice, and they say
 That thou in secret nuturest up thy son,
 Him whom thou hiddest when thy husband fell, 145
 To avenge that fall, and bring them back to power
 Such are their hopes—I ask not if by thee
 Willingly fed or no—their most vain hopes,
 For I have kept conspiracy fast-chain'd
 Till now, and I have strength to chain it still 150
 But, Merope, the years advance,—I stand
 Upon the threshold of old age, alone,
 Always in arms, always in face of foes
 The long repressive attitude of rule

123 1858 had sprung 134 1858 Since then,

MEROPE

Leaves me austerer, sterner, than I would, 155
 Old age is more suspicious than the free
 And valiant heart of youth, or manhood's firm
 Unclouded reason, I would not decline
 Into a jealous tyrant, scourged with fears,
 Closing in blood and gloom his sullen reign 160
 The cares which might in me with time, I feel,
 Beget a cruel temper, help me quell!
 The breach between our parties help me close!
 Assist me to rule mildly, let us join
 Our hands in solemn union, making friends 165
 Our factions with the friendship of their chiefs.
 Let us in marriage, King and Queen, unite
 Claims ever hostile else, and set thy son—
 No more an exile fed on empty hopes,
 And to an unsubstantial title heir, 170
 But prince adopted by the will of power,
 And future king—before this people's eyes.
 Consider him! consider not old hates!
 Consider, too, this people, who were dear
 To their dead king, thy husband—yea, too dear, 175
 For that destroy'd him Give them peace! thou can'st.
 O Merope, how many noble thoughts,
 How many precious feelings of man's heart,
 How many loves, how many gratitudes,
 Do twenty years wear out, and see expire! 180
 Shall they not wear one hatred out as well?

Merope

Thou hast forgot, then, who I am who hear,
 And who thou art who speakest to me? I
 Am Merope, thy murder'd master's wife,
 And thou art Polyphontes, first his friend, 185
 And then his murderer These offending tears
 That murder moves, this breach that thou would'st close
 Was by that murder open'd, that one child

187 1858 murder draws,

MEROPE

(If still, indeed, he lives) whom thou would'st seat
 Upon a throne not thine to give, is heir, 190
 Because thou slew'st his brothers with their father
 Who can patch union here? What can there be
 But everlasting horror 'twixt us two,
 Gulfs of estranging blood? Across that chasm
 Who can extend their hands? Maidens, take back 195
 These offerings home! our rites are spoil'd to-day

Polyphontes

Not so, let these Messenian maidens mark
 The fear'd and blacken'd ruler of their race,
 Albeit with lips unapt to self-excuse,
 Blow off the spot of murder from his name — 200
 Murder!—but what is murder? When a wretch
 For private gain or hatred takes a life,
 We call it murder, crush him, brand his name
 But when, for some great public cause, an arm
 Is, without love or hate, austere raised 205
 Against a power exempt from common checks,
 Dangerous to all, to be but thus annull'd—
 Ranks any man with murder such an act?
 With grievous deeds, perhaps, with murder, no!
 Find then such cause, the charge of murder falls— 210
 Be judge thyself if it abound not here
 All know how weak the eagle, Heracles,
 Soaring from his death-pile on Æta, left
 His puny, callow eaglets, and what trials—
 Infirm protectors, dubious oracles 215
 Construed awry, misplann'd invasions—wore
 Three generations of his offspring out,
 Hardly the fourth, with grievous loss, regain'd
 Their father's realm, this isle, from Pelops named
 Who made that triumph, though deferr'd, secure? 220
 Who, but the kinsmen of the royal brood

216 1858 invasions—us'd 217 1858 Two generations of his
 offspring up, 218 1858 the third

MEROPE

Of Heracles, scarce Heracleidæ less
 Than they² these, and the Dorian lords, whose king
 Ægimius gave our outcast house a home
 When Thebes, when Athens dared not, who in arms 225
 Thrice issued with us from their pastoral vales,
 And shed their blood like water in our cause²
 Such were the dispossessors, of what stamp
 Were they we dispossessed²—of us I speak,
 Who to Messenia with thy husband came, 230
 I speak not now of Argos, where his brother,
 Not now of Sparta, where his nephews reign'd —
 What we found here were tribes of fame obscure,
 Much turbulence, and little constancy,
 Precariously ruled by foreign lords 235
 From the Æolian stock of Neleus sprung,
 A house once great, now dwindling in its sons
 Such were the conquer'd, such the conquerors, who
 Had most thy husband's confidence² Consult
 His acts! the wife he chose was—full of virtues— 240
 But an Arcadian princess, more akin
 To his new subjects than to us, his friends
 Were the Messenian chiefs, the laws he framed
 Were aim'd at their promotion, our decline
 And, finally, this land, then half-subdued, 245
 Which from one central city's guarded seat
 As from a fastness in the rocks our scant
 Handful of Dorian conquerors might have curb'd,
 He parcell'd out in five confederate states,
 Sowing his victors thinly through them all, 250
 Mere prisoners, meant or not, among our foes
 If this was fear of them, it shamed the king,
 If jealousy of us, it shamed the man
 Long we refrain'd ourselves, submitted long,
 Construed his acts indulgently, revered, 255
 Though found perverse, the blood of Heracles,
 Reluctantly the rest—but, against all,
 One voice preach'd patience, and that voice was mine!

MEROPE

At last it reach'd us, that he, still mistrustful,
 Deeming, as tyrants deem, our silence hate, 260
 Unadulating grief conspiracy,
 Had to this city, Stenyclaros, call'd
 A general assemblage of the realm,
 With compact in that concourse to deliver,
 For death, his ancient to his new-made friends, 265
 Patience was thenceforth self destruction I,
 I his chief kinsman, I his pioneer
 And champion to the throne, I honouring most
 Of men the line of Heracles, prefer'd
 The many of that lineage to the one, 270
 What his foes dared not, I, his lover, dared,
 I at that altar, where mid shouting crowds
 He sacrificed, our ruin in his heart,
 To Zeus, before he struck his blow, struck mine—
 Struck once, and awed his mob, and saved this realm 275
 Murder let others call this, if they will,
 I, self-defence and righteous execution

Merope

Alas, how fair a colour can his tongue,
 Who self-exculpates, lend to foulest deeds!
 Thy trusting lord didst thou, his servant, slay, 280
 Kinsman, thou slew'st thy kinsman, friend, thy friend—
 Thus were enough, but let me tell thee, too,
 Thou hadst no cause, as feign'd, in his misrule
 For ask at Argos, ask in Lacedæmon,
 Whose people, when the Heracleidæ came, 285
 Were hunted out, and to Achaia fled,
 Whether is better, to abide alone,
 A wolfish band, in a dispeopled realm,
 Or conquerors with conquer'd to unite
 Into one puissant folk, as he design'd? 290
 These sturdy and unworn Messenian tribes,
 Who shook the fierce Neleidæ on their throne,
 Who to the invading Dorians stretch'd a hand,

MEROPE

And half bestow'd, half yielded up their soil—
 He would not let his savage chiefs alight, 295
 A cloud of vultures, on this vigorous race,
 Ravin a little while in spoil and blood,
 Then, gorged and helpless, be assail'd and slain
 He would have saved you from your furious selves
 Not in abhorr'd estrangement let you stand, 300
 He would have mix'd you with your friendly foes,
 Foes dazzled with your prowess, well inclined
 To reverence your lineage, more, to obey,
 So would have built you, in a few short years
 A just, therefore a safe, supremacy 305
 For well he knew, what you, his chiefs, did not—
 How of all human rules the over-tense
 Are apt to snap, the easy-stretch'd endure
 O gentle wisdom, little understood!
 O arts above the vulgar tyrant's reach! 310
 O policy too subtle far for sense
 Of heady, masterful, injurious men!
 This good he meant you, and for this he died!
 Yet not for this—else might thy crime in part
 Be error deem'd—but that pretence is vain 315
 For, if ye slew him for supposed misrule,
 Injustice to his kin and Dorian friends,
 Why with the offending father did ye slay
 Two unoffending babes, his innocent sons?
 Why not on them have placed the forfeit crown, 320
 Ruled in their name, and train'd them to your will?
 Had *they* misruled? had *they* forgot their friends,
 Forsworn their blood? ungratefully had *they*
 Preferr'd Messenian serfs to Dorian lords?
 No! but to thy ambition their poor lives 325
 Were bar—and this, too, was their father's crime
 That thou might'st reign he died, not for his fault
 Even fancied, and his death thou wroughtest chief!
 For, if the other lords desired his fall
 Hotlier than thou, and were by thee kept back, 330

MEROPE

Why dost thou only profit by his death?³
Thy crown condemns thee, while thy tongue absolves,
And now to me thou tenderest friendly league,
And to my son reversion to thy throne!
Short answer is sufficient, league with thee, 335
For me I deem such impious, and for him
Exile abroad more safe than heirship here

Polyphontes

I ask thee not to approve thy husband's death,
No, nor expect thee to admit the grounds,
In reason good, which justified my deed 340
With women the heart argues, not the mind
But, for thy children's death, I stand assoil'd—
I saved them, meant them honour, but thy friends
Rose, and with fire and sword assailed my house
By night, in that blind tumult they were slain 345
To chance impute their deaths, then, not to me

Merope

Such chance as kill'd the father, kill'd the sons

Polyphontes

One son at least I spared, for still he lives

Merope

Tyrants think him they murder not they spare.

Polyphontes

Not much a tyrant thy free speech displays me 350

Merope

Thy shame secures my freedom, not thy will

Polyphontes

Shame rarely checks the genuine tyrant's will.

MEROPE

Merope

One merit, then, thou hast, exult in that.

Polyphontes

Thou standest out, I see, repellst peace.

Merope

Thy sword repell'd it long ago, not I 355

Polyphontes

Doubtless thou reckonest on the help of friends.

Merope

Not help of men, although, perhaps, of Gods

Polyphontes

What Gods? the Gods of concord, civil weal?

Merope

No! the avenging Gods, who punish crime

Polyphontes

Beware! from thee upbraidings I receive 360

With pity, nay, with reverence, yet, beware!

I know, I know how hard it is to think

That right, that conscience pointed to a deed,

Where interest seems to have enjoin'd it too

Most men are led by interest, and the few 365

Who are not, expiate the general sin,

Involved in one suspicion with the base

Dizzy the path and perilous the way

Which in a deed like mine a just man treads,

But it is sometimes trodden, oh! believe it 370

Yet how *canst* thou believe it? therefore thou

Hast all impunity Yet, lest thy friends,

Embolden'd by my lenience, think it fear,

356 1858 the hope

MEROPE

And count on like impunity, and rise,
 And have to thank thee for a fall, beware! 375
 To rule this kingdom I intend, with sway
 Clement, if may be, but to rule it—there
 Expect no wavering, no retreat, no change
 And now I leave thee to these rites, esteem'd
 Pious, but impious, surely, if their scope 380
 Be to foment old memories of wrath
 Pray, as thou pour'st libations on this tomb,
 To be deliver'd from thy foster'd hate,
 Unjust suspicion, and erroneous fear

[POLYPHONTES goes into the palace THE CHORUS and
 MEROPE approach the tomb with their offerings]

The Chorus

Draw, draw near to the tomb! *strophe* 385
 Lay honey-cakes on its marge,
 Pour the libation of milk,
 Deck it with garlands of flowers
 Tears fall thickly the while!
 Behold, O King from the dark 390
 House of the grave, what we do!

O Arcadian hills, *antistrophe*
 Send us the Youth whom ye hide,
 Girt with his coat for the chase,
 With the low broad hat of the tann'd 395
 Hunter o'ershadowing his brow,
 Grasping firm, in his hand
 Advanced, two javelins, not now
 Dangerous alone to the deer!

Merope

What shall I bear, O lost *str 1* 400
 Husband and King, to thy grave?—
 Pure libations, and fresh
 Flowers? But thou, in the gloom,

MEROPE

Discontented, perhaps,
Demandest vengeance, not grief?
Sternly request a man,
Light to spring up to thy house?

The Chorus

Vengeance, O Queen, is his due, str 2.
His most just prayer, yet his house—
If that might soothe him below— 410
Prosperous, mighty, came back
In the third generation, the way
Order'd by Fate, to their home,
And now, glorious, secure,
Fill the wealth-giving thrones 415
Of their heritage, Pelops' isle

Merope

Suffering sent them, Death ant 1
March'd with them, Hatred and Strife
Met them entering their halls
For from the day when the first 420
Heracleidæ received
That Delphic hest to return,
What hath involved them, but blind
Error on error, and blood?

The Chorus

Truly I hear of a Maid ant 2 425
Of that stock born, who bestow'd
Her blood that so she might make
Victory sure to her race,
When the fight hung in doubt! but she now,
Honour'd and sung of by all, 430
Far on Marathon plain,
Gives her name to the spring
Macaria, blessed Child

407 1858 thy race?

409 1858 yet his race—

MEROPE

Merope

She led the way of death	str 3
And the plain of Tegea,	435
And the grave of Orestes—	
Where, in secret seclusion	
Of his unreveal'd tomb,	
Sleeps Agamemnon's unhappy,	
Matricidal, world-famed,	440
Seven-cubit-statured son—	
Sent forth Echemus, the victor, the king,	
By whose hand, at the Isthmus,	
At the fate-denied straits,	
Fell the eldest of the sons of Heracles,	445
Hyllus, the chief of his house	
Brother follow'd sister	
The all-wept way	

The Chorus

Yes, but his seed still, wiser-counsell'd,	
Sail'd by the fate-meant Gulf to their conquest—	450
Slew their enemies' king, Tisamenus	
Wherefore accept that happier omen!	
Yet shall restorer appear to the race	

Merope

Three brothers won the field,	ant 3
And to two did Destiny	455
Give the thrones that they conquer'd,	
But the third, what delays him	
From his unattain'd crown?	
Ah Pylades and Electra,	
Ever faithful, untired,	460
Jealous, blood-exacting friends!	
Your sons leap upon the foe of your kin,	
In the passes of Delphi,	

449	1858	his son's seed, wiser-counsell'd,	453	1858	shall restorers
462	1858	Ye lie watching for the foe			

MEROPE

In the temple-built gorge!
 There the youngest of the band of conquerors 465
 Perish'd, in sight of the goal
 Thrice son follow'd sire
 The all-wept way

The Chorus

Thou tellest the fate of the last str 4
 Of the three Heracleidæ 470
 Not of him, of Cresphontes thou shared'st the lot!
 A king, a king was he while he lived,
 Swaying the sceptre with predestined hand,
 And now, minister loved,
 Holds rule

Merope

Ah me Ah .. 475

The Chorus

For the awful Monarchs below

Merope

Thou touchest the worst of my ills str 5
 Oh had he fallen of old
 At the Isthmus, in fight with his foes,
 By Achaian, Arcadian spear! 480
 Then had his sepulchre risen
 On the high sea-bank, in the sight
 Of either Gulf, and remain'd
 All-regarded afar,
 Noble memorial of worth 485
 Of a valiant Chief, to his own.

The Chorus

There rose up a cry in the streets ant 4.
 From the terrified people

467 1858 Grandson follow'd sire

MEROPE

490

Метопе

Ah me Ah . .

The Chorus

Of a dreadful Presence of fear

Merope

an^r 5 495

The Chorus

str 6. 505

511 1858 in joy

513 1858 in safety, a nursling, a light.

MEROPE

Soon, soon shall Zeus bring him home!
 Soon shall he dawn on this land! 515

Merope

Him in secret, in tears, str 7
 Month after month, I await
 Vainly For he, in the glens
 Of Lycæus afar,
 A gladsome hunter of deer, 520
 Basks in his morning of youth,
 Spares not a thought to his home

The Chorus

Give not thy heart to despair ant 6.
 No lamentation can loose
 Prisoners of death from the grave, 525
 But Zeus, who accounteth thy quarrel his own,
 Still rules, still watches, and numb'reth the hours
 Till the sinner, the vengeance, be ripe
 Still, by Acheron stream,
 Terrible Deities throned 530
 Sit, and eye grimly the victim unscurged.
 Still, still the Dorian boy,
 Exiled, remembers his home

Merope

Him if high-ruling Zeus ant 7

514 1858	Yet, yet shall	515 1858	Yet shall	For 517-22 1858
	Month after month, through the slow-dragging year,			
	Longing, listening, I wait, I implore.			
	But he comes not. What dell,			
	O Erymanthus! from sight			
	Of his mother, which of thy glades,			
	O Lycæus! conceals			
	The happy hunter ² He basks			
	In youth's pure morning, nor thinks			
	On the blood-stain'd home of his birth			
527 1858	and numbers	531 1858	Sit, and make ready the serpent,	
	the scourge.			

MEROPE

Bring to me safe, let the rest
Go as it will! But if this
Clash with justice, the Gods
Forgive my folly, and work
Vengeance on sinner and sin—
Only to me give my child!

535
540

The Chorus

Hear us and help us, Shade of our King!

str 8.

Merope

A return, O Father! give to thy boy!

str 9

The Chorus

Send an avenger, Gods of the dead!

ant 8

Merope

An avenger I ask not—send me my son!

ant 9.

The Chorus

O Queen, for an avenger to appear,
Thinking that so I pray'd aright, I pray'd,
If I pray'd wrongly, I revoke the prayer

545

Merope

Forgive me, maidens, if I seem too slack
In calling vengeance on a murderer's head
Impious I deem the alliance which he asks,

550

For 535-40 1858

Bring to his mother, the rest I commit,
Willing, patient, to Zeus, to his care.
Blood I ask not. Enough
Sated, and more than enough,
Are mine eyes with blood But if this,
O my comforters! strays
Amiss from Justice, the Gods
Forgive my folly, and work
What they will!—but to me give my son!

MEROPE

Requite him words severe for seeming kind,
 And righteous, if he falls, I count his fall
 With thus, to those unbribed inquisitors
 Who in man's inmost bosom sit and judge,
 The true avengers these, I leave his deed, 555
 By him shown fair, but, I believe, most foul
 If these condemn him, let them pass his doom!
 That doom obtain effect, from Gods or men!
 So be it, yet will that more solace bring
 To the chafed heart of Justice than to mine 560
 To hear another tumult in these streets,
 To have another murder in these halls,
 To see another mighty victim bleed—
 Small comfort offers for a woman there!
 A woman, O my friends, has one desire 565
 To see secure, to live with, those she loves
 Can vengeance give me back the murdered? no!
 Can it bring home my child? Ah, if it can,
 I pray the Furies' ever-restless band,
 And pray the Gods, and pray the all-seeing sun 570
 'Sun, who careerest through the height of Heaven,
 When o'er the Arcadian forests thou art come,
 And see'st my stripling hunter there afield,
 Put tightness in thy gold-embossed rein,
 And check thy fiery steeds, and, leaning back, 575
 Throw him a pealing word of summons down,
 To come, a late avenger, to the aid
 Of this poor soul who bare him, and his sire!
 If this will bring him back, be thus my prayer!
 But Vengeance travels in a dangerous way, 580
 Double of issue, full of pits and snares
 For all who pass, pursuers and pursued—
 That way is dubious for a mother's prayer
 Rather on thee I call, Husband beloved—
 May Hermes, herald of the dead, convey 585
 564 1858 There is small comfort for a woman here.
 bore 578 1858 who

MEROPE

My words below to thee, and make thee hear—
Bring back our son! if may be, without blood!
Install him in thy throne, still without blood!
Grant him to reign there wise and just like thee,
More fortunate than thee, more fairly judged! 590
Thus for our son, and for myself I pray,
Soon, having once beheld him, to descend
Into the quiet gloom, where thou art now
These words to thine indulgent ear, thy wife,
I send, and these libations pour the while 595
[*They make their offerings at the tomb* MEROPE *then*
turns to go towards the palace

The Chorus

The dead hath now his offerings duly paid
But whither go'st thou hence, O Queen, away?

Merope

To receive Arcas, who to-day should come,
Bringing me of my boy the annual news

The Chorus

No certain news if like the rest it run. 600

Merope

Certain in this, that 'tis uncertain still

The Chorus

What keeps him in Arcadia from return?

Merope

His grandsire and his uncles fear the risk

The Chorus

Of what? it lies with them to make risk none

After 595 1858 stage direction, second sentence, reads MEROPE then goes towards the palace

MEROPE

Merope

Discovery of a visit made by stealth. 605

The Chorus

With arms then they should send him, not by stealth.

Merope

With arms they dare not, and by stealth they fear

The Chorus

I doubt their caution little suits their ward

Merope

The heart of youth I know, that most I fear

The Chorus

I augur thou wilt hear some bold resolve 610

Merope

I dare not wish it, but, at least, to hear
That my son still survives, in health, in bloom,
To hear that still he loves, still longs for, me,
Yet, with a light uncareworn spirit, turns
Quick from distressful thought, and floats in joy— 615
Thus much from Arcas, my old servant true,
Who saved him from these murderous halls a babe,
And since has fondly watch'd him night and day
Save for this annual charge, I hope to hear
If this be all, I know not, but I know, 620
These many years I live for this alone

[MEROPE goes in

The Chorus

Much is there which the sea
Conceals from man, who cannot plumb its depths. str 1
Air to his unwing'd form denies a way,
And keeps its liquid solitudes unscaled 625

MEROPE

Even earth, whereon he treads,
So feeble is his march, so slow,
Holds countless tracts untrod

But more than all unplumb'd,
Unscaled, untrodden, is the heart of man
More than all secrets hid, the way it keeps
Nor any of our organs so obtuse,
Inaccurate, and frail,
As those wherewith we try to test
Feelings and motives there

art 1
630

Yea, and not only have we not explored
That wide and various world, the heart of others,
But even our own heart, that narrow world
Bounded in our own breast, we hardly know,
Of our own actions dimly trace the causes
Whether a natural obscureness, hiding
That region in perpetual cloud,
Or our own want of effort, be the bar

635
str 2

Therefore—while acts are from their motives judged,
And to one act many most unlike motives,
This pure, that guilty, may have each impell'd—
Power fails us to try clearly if that cause
Assign'd us by the actor be the true one,
Power fails the man himself to fix distinctly
The cause which drew him to his deed,
And stamp himself, thereafter, bad or good

ant 2
645

The most are bad, wise men have said
Let the best rule, they say again
The best, then, to dominion hath the right
Rights unconceded and denied,
Surely, if rights, may be by force asserted—
May be, nay should, if for the general weal
The best, then, to the throne may carve his way,
And strike opposers down,

str 3
650
655

634 1858 those with which
659 1858 And hew

654 1858 have the right

MEROPE

Free from all guilt of lawlessness, 660
Or selfish lust of personal power,
Bent only to serve virtue,
Bent to diminish wrong

And truly, in this ill-ruled world, ant 3
Well sometimes may the good desire 665
To give to virtue her dominion due!
Well may he long to interrupt
The reign of folly, usurpation ever,
Though fenced by sanction of a thousand years!
Well thirst to drag the wrongful ruler down, 670
Well purpose to pen back
Into the narrow path of right
The ignorant, headlong multitude,
Who blindly follow, ever,
Blind leaders, to their bane! 675

But who can say, without a fear str 4
That best, who ought to rule, am I,
The mob, who ought to obey, are these,
I the one righteous, they the many bad?
Who, without check of conscience, can aver 680
That he to power makes way by arms,
Sheds blood, imprisons, banishes, attaints,
Commits all deeds the guilty oftenest do,
Without a single guilty thought,
Arm'd for right only, and the general good? 685

Therefore, with censure unallay'd, ant 4
Therefore, with unexcepting ban,
Zeus and pure-thoughted Justice brand
Imperious self-asserting violence,
Sternly condemn the too bold man, who dares 690
Elect himself Heaven's destined arm,,
And, knowing well man's inmost heart infirm,
However noble the committer be,

667 1858 they long

MEROPE

His grounds however specious shown,
Turn with averted eyes from deeds of blood 695

Thus, though a woman, I was school'd
By those whom I revere *epode*

Whether I learnt their lessons well,
Or, having learnt them, well apply
To what hath in this house befall'n, 700
If in the event be any proof,
The event will quickly show

[ÆPYTUS comes in

Æpytus

Maidens, assure me if they told me true
Who told me that the royal house was here

The Chorus

Rightly they told thee, and thou art arrived 705

Æpytus

Here, then, it is, where Polyphontes dwells?

The Chorus

He doth, thou hast both house and master right

Æpytus

Might some one straight inform him he is sought?

The Chorus

Inform him that thyself, for here he comes

[POLYPHONTES comes forth, with ATTENDANTS and
GUARDS

Æpytus

O King, all hail! I come with weighty news, 710
Most likely, grateful, but, in all case, sure

Polyphontes

Speak them, that I may judge their kind myself

MEROPE

Æpytus

Accept them in one word, for good or bad
Æpytus, the Messenian prince, is dead!

Polyphontes

Dead!—and when died he? where? and by what hand? 715
And who art thou, who bringest me such news?

Æpytus

He perish'd in Arcadia, where he dwelt
With Cypselus, and two days since he died
One of the train of Cypselus am I

Polyphontes

Instruct me of the manner of his death 720

Æpytus

That will I do, and to this end I came
For, being of like age, of birth not mean,
The son of an Arcadian noble, I
Was chosen his companion from a boy,
And on the hunting-rambles which his heart, 725
Unquiet, drove him ever to pursue
Through all the lordships of the Arcadian dales,
From chief to chief, I wander'd at his side,
The captain of his squires, and his guard
On such a hunting-journey, three morns since, 730
With beaters, hounds, and huntsmen, he and I
Set forth from Tegea, the royal tow'nd
The prince at start seem'd sad, but his regard
Clear'd with blithe travel and the morning air
We rode from Tegea, through the woods of oaks, 735
Past Arnê spring, where Rhea gave the babe
Poseidon to the shepherd-boys to hîde
From Saturn's search among the new-yea'd lambs,
To Mantinea, with its unbaked walls,

717 1858 where he liv'd

739 1858 To Mantinea

MEROPE

Thence, by the Sea-God's Sanctuary and the tomb 740
 Whither from wintry Mænalus were brought
 The bones of Arcas, whence our race is named,
 On, to the marshy Orchomenian plain,
 And the Stone Coffins,—then, by Caphyæ Cliffs,
 To Pheneos with its craggy citadel 745
 There, with the chief of that hill-town, we lodged
 One night, and the next day at dawn fared on
 By the Three Fountains and the Adder's Hill
 To the Stympalian Lake, our journey's end,
 To draw the coverts on Cyllenê's side 750
 There, on a high green spur which bathes its point
 Far in the liquid lake, we sate, and drew
 Cates from our hunters' pouch, Arcadian fare,
 Sweet chestnuts, barley-cakes, and boar's-flesh dried,
 And as we ate, and rested there, we talk'd 755
 Of places we had pass'd, sport we had had,
 Of beasts of chase that haunt the Arcadian hills,
 Wild hog, and bear, and mountain-deer, and roe,
 Last, of our quarters with the Arcadian chiefs
 For courteous entertainment, welcome warm, 760
 Sad, reverential homage, had our prince
 From all, for his great lineage and his woes,
 All which he own'd, and praised with grateful mind
 But still over his speech a gloom there hung,
 As of one shadow'd by impending death, 765
 And strangely, as we talk'd, he would apply
 The story of spots mention'd to his own,
 Telling us, Arnê minded him, he too
 Was saved a babe, but to a life obscure,
 Which he, the seed of Heracles, dragg'd on 770
 Inglorious, and should drop at last unknown,
 Even as those dead unepitaph'd, who lie
 In the stone coffins at Orchomenus
 And, then, he bade remember how we pass'd

751 1858 There, on a grassy spur which bathes its root

MEROPE

The Mantuean Sanctuary, forbid
 To foot of mortal, where his ancestor, 775
 Named Æpytus like him, having gone in,
 Was blinded by the outgushing springs of brine
 Then, turning westward to the Adder's Hill—
Another ancestor, named, too, like me, 780
Died of a snake-bite, said he, on that brow,
Still at his mountain-tomb men marvel, built
Where, as life ebb'd, his bearers laid him down
 So he play'd on, then ended, with a smile
This region is not happy for my race 785
 We cheer'd him, but, that moment, from the copse
 By the lake-edge, broke the sharp cry of hounds,
 The pricklers shouted that the stag was gone
 We sprang upon our feet, we snatch'd our spears,
 We bounded down the swarded slope, we plunged 790
 Through the dense ilex-thickets to the dogs
 Far in the woods ahead their music rang,
 And many times that morn we coursed in ring
 The forests round that belt Cyllenê's side,
 Till I, thrown out and tired, came to halt 795
 On that same spur where we had sate at morn
 And resting there to breathe, I watch'd the chase—
 Rare, straggling hunters, foil'd by brake and crag,
 And the prince, single, pressing on the rear
 Of that unflagging quarry and the hounds 800
 Now in the woods far down I saw them cross
 An open glade, now he was high aloft
 On some tall scar fringed with dark feathery pines,
 Peering to spy a goat-track down the cliff,
 Cheering with hand, and voice, and horn his dogs 805
 At last the cry drew to the water's edge—
 And through the brushwood, to the pebbly strand,
 Broke, black with sweat, the antler'd mountain-stag,
 And took the lake Two hounds alone pursued,

775 1858 Mantuean 794 1858 which belt 796 1858 the same
 797 1858 I saw below

MEROPE

Then came the prince, he shouted and plunged in 810
 —There is a chasm rifted in the base
 Of that unfooted precipice, whose rock
 Walls on one side the deep Stympthalian Lake,
 There the lake-waters, which in ages gone
 Wash'd, as the marks upon the hills still show, 815
 All the Stympthalian plain, are now suck'd down
 A headland, with one aged plane-tree crown'd,
 Parts from this cave-pierced cliff the shelving bay
 Where first the chase plunged in, the bay is smooth,
 But round the headland's point a current sets, 820
 Strong, black, tempestuous, to the cavern-mouth,
 Stoutly, under the headland's lee, they swam,
 But when they came abreast the point, the race
 Caught them as wind takes feathers, whirl'd them round
 Struggling in vain to cross it, swept them on, 825
 Stag, dogs, and hunter, to the yawning gulph.
 All this, O King, not piecemeal, as to thee
 Now told, but in one flashing instant pass'd
 While from the turf whereon I lay I sprang
 And took three strides, quarry and dogs were gone, 830
 A moment more—I saw the prince turn round
 Once in the black and arrowy race, and cast
 An arm aloft for help, then sweep beneath
 The low-brow'd cavern-arch, and disappear
 And what I could, I did—to call by cries 835
 Some straggling hunters to my aid, to rouse
 Fishers who live on the lake-side, to launch
 Boats, and approach, near as we dared, the chasm
 But of the prince nothing remain'd, save this,
 His boar-spear's broken shaft, back on the lake 840
 Cast by the rumbling subterranean stream,
 And this, at landing spied by us and saved,
 His broad-brimm'd hunter's hat, which, in the bay,
 Where first the stag took water, floated still
 And I across the mountains brought with haste 845

818 1858 the cave-pierc'd

833 1858 One arm

MEROPE

To Cypselus, at Basilis, this news—
Basilis, his new city, which he now
Near Lycosura builds, Lycaon's town,
First city founded on the earth by men
He to thee sends me on, in one thing glad, 850
While all else grieves him, that his grandchild's death
Extinguishes distrust 'twixt him and thee
But I from our deplored mischance learn this
The man who to untimely death is doom'd,
Vainly you hedge him from the assault of harm, 855
He bears the seed of ruin in himself

The Chorus

So dies the last shoot of our royal tree!
Who shall tell Merope this heavy news?

Polyphontes

Stranger, this news thou bringest is too great
For instant comment, having many sides 860
Of import, and in silence best received,
Whether it turn at last to joy or woe
But thou, the zealous bearer, hast no part
In what it hath of painful, whether now,
First heard, or in its future issue shown 865
Thou for thy labour hast deserved our best
Refreshment, needed by thee, as I judge,
With mountain-travel and night-watching spent —
To the guest-chamber lead him, some one! give
All entertainment which a traveller needs, 870
And such as fits a royal house to show,
To friends, still more, and labourers in our cause

[ATTENDANTS conduct ÆPYTUS within the palace]

The Chorus

The youth is gone within, alas! he bears
A presence sad for some one through those doors.

859 1858 the news 864 1858 it has

MEROPE

Polyphontes

Admire then, maidens, how in one short hour 875
 The schemes, pursued in vain for twenty years,
 Are—by a stroke, though undesired, complete—
 Crown'd with success, not in my way, but Heaven's!
 This at a moment, too, when I had urged
 A last, long-cherish'd project, in my aim 880
 Of peace, and been repulsed with hate and scorn
 Fair terms of reconciliation, equal rule,
 I offer'd to my foes, and they refused,
 Worse terms than mine they have obtain'd from Heaven
 Dure is this blow for Merope, and I 885
 Wish'd, truly wish'd, solution to our broil
 Other than by this death, but it hath come!
 I speak no word of boast, but thus I say
 A private loss here founds a nation's peace

[POLYPHONTES goes out

The Chorus

Peace, who tarriest too long, str 890
 Peace, with delight in thy train,
 Come, come back to our prayer!
 Then shall the revel again
 Visit our streets, and the sound
 Of the harp be heard with the pipe, 895
 When the flashing torches appear
 In the marriage-train coming on,
 With dancing maidens and boys—
 While the matrons come to the doors,
 And the old men rise from their bench, 900
 When the youths bring home the bride.
 Not condemn'd by my voice ant
 He who restores thee shall be,
 Not unfavour'd by Heaven

881 1858 Of concord, and been baffled with disdain.
 decried

902 1858 Not

MEROPE

Surely no sinner the man, 905
Dread though his acts, to whose hand
Such a boon to bring hath been given
Let her come, fair Peace! let her come!
But the demons long nourish'd here,
Murder, Discord, and Hate, 910
In the stormy desolate waves
Of the Thracian Sea let her leave,
Or the howling outermost main!

[MEROPE comes forth

Merope

A whisper through the palace flies of one
Arrived from Tegea with weighty news, 915
And I came, thinking to find Arcas here
Ye have not left this gate, which he must pass,
Tell me—hath one not come? or, worse mischance,
Come, but been intercepted by the King?

The Chorus

A messenger, sent from Arcadia here, 920
Arrived, and of the King had speech but now

Merope

Ah me! the wrong expectant got his news

The Chorus

The message brought was for the King design'd

Merope

How so? was Arcas not the messenger?

The Chorus

A younger man, and of a different name 925

Merope

And what Arcadian news had he to tell?

MEROPE

The Chorus

Learn that from other lips, O Queen, than mine

Merope

He kept his tale, then, for the King alone²

The Chorus

His tale was meeter for that ear than thine

Merope

Why dost thou falter, and make half reply²

930

The Chorus

O thrice unhappy, how I groan thy fate!

Merope

Thou frightenest and confound'st me by thy words
O were but Arcas come, all would be well!

The Chorus

If so, all's well for look, the old man speeds
Up from the city tow'rd this gated hill

935

[ARCAS comes in

Merope

Not with the failing breath and foot of age
My faithful follower comes Welcome, old friend!

Arcas

Faithful, not welcome, when my tale is told
O that my over-speed and bursting grief
Had on the journey choked my labouring breath,
And lock'd my speech for ever in my breast!
Yet then another man would bring this news,
Wherewith from end to end Arcadia rings —
O honour'd Queen, thy son, my charge, is gone

940

935 1858 tow'rd this

943 First inserted in 1885.

MEROPE

The Chorus

Too suddenly thou tellest such a loss 945
 Look up, O Queen! look up, O mistress dear!
 Look up, and see thy friends who comfort thee

Merope

Ah Ah Ah me!

The Chorus

And I, too, say, ah me!

Arcas

Forgive, forgive the bringer of such news!

Merope

Better from thine than from an enemy's tongue 950

The Chorus

And yet no enemy did this, O Queen
 But the wit-baffling will and hand of Heaven

Arcas

No enemy! and what hast thou, then, heard?
 Swift as I came, hath falsehood been before?

The Chorus

A youth arrived but now—the son, he said, 955
 Of an Arcadian lord—our prince's friend—
 Jaded with travel, clad in hunter's garb
 He brought report that his own eyes had seen
 The prince, in chase after a swimming stag,
 Swept down a chasm rifted in the cliff 960
 Which hangs o'er the Stymphalian Lake, and drown'd

Arcas

Ah me! with what a foot doth treason post,
 While loyalty, with all her speed, is slow!

960 1858 chasm broken

MEROPE

Another tale, I trow, thy messenger
For the King's private ear reserves, like this
In one thing only, that the prince is dead

965

The Chorus

And how then runs this true and private tale?

Arcas

As much to the King's wish, more to his shame,
This young Arcadian noble, guard and mate
To Ægyptus, the king seduced with gold,
And had him at the prince's side in leash,
Ready to slip on his unconscious prey
He on a hunting party two days since,
Among the forests on Cyllenë's side,
Perform'd good service for his bloody wage,
Our prince, and the good Laias, whom his ward
Had in a father's place, he basely murder'd
'Tis so, 'tis so, alas, for see the proof
Uncle and nephew disappear, their death
Is charged against this stripling, agents, fee'd
To ply 'twixt the Messenian king and him,
Come forth, denounce the traffic and the traitor
Seized, he escapes—and next I find him here
Take this for true, the other tale for feign'd

970

975

980

973 1858 three days 976 1858 The prince, his uncle Laias, whom
978-80 First inserted in 1885 981-3 Altered from part of 1858 text
otherwise omitted in 1885 (see below, after line 985) Between 984 and 986
1858

The Chorus

And this perfidious murder who reveal'd?

Arcas

The faithless murderer's own, no other tongue

The Chorus

Did conscience goad him to denounce himself?

Arcas

To Cypselus at Basilis he brought
This strange unlikely tale, the prince was drown'd

The Chorus

But not a word appears of murder here.

MEROPE

The Chorus

The youth, thou say'st, we saw and heard but now— 985

Arcas

He comes to tell his prompter he hath sped.

The Chorus

Still he repeats the drowning story here

Arcas

To thee—that needs no Œdipus to explain

The Chorus

Interpret, then, for we, it seems, are dull

Arcas

Your King desired the profit of his death, 990
Not the black credit of his murderer
That stern word '*murder*' had too dread a sound
For the Messenian hearts, who loved the prince

The Chorus

Suspicion grave I see, but no firm proof

Merope

Peace! peace! all's clear —The wicked watch and work 995

Arcas

Examined close, he own'd this story false
Then evidence came—his comrades of the hunt,
Who saw the prince and Laas last with him,
Never again in life—next, agents, fee d
To ply 'twixt the Messenian king and him,
Spoke, and reveal'd that traffic, and the traitor
So charg'd, he stood dumb-founder'd Cypselus,
On this suspicion, cast him into chains
Thence he escap'd—and next I find him here

The Chorus

His presence with the King, thou mean'st, implies—

985 First inserted in 1885

994 1858 clear proof

MEROPE

While the good sleep, the workers have the day.
 Yes! yes! now I conceive the liberal grace
 Of this far-scheming tyrant and his boon
 Of heirship to his kingdom for my son
 He had his murderer ready, and the sword 1000
 Lifted, and that unwish'd-for heirship void—
 A tale, meanwhile, forged for his subjects' ears—
 And me, henceforth sole rival with himself
 In their allegiance, me, in my son's death-hour,
 When all turn'd tow'rds me, me he would have shown 1005
 To my Messenians, duped, disarm'd, despised,
 The willing sharer of his guilty rule,
 All claim to succour forfeit, to myself
 Hateful, by each Messenian heart abhorr'd
 His offers I repell'd—but what of that? 1010
 If with no rage, no fire of righteous hate,
 Such as ere now hath spurr'd to fearful deeds
 Weak women with a thousandth part my wrongs,
 But calm, but unresentful, I endured
 His offers, coldly heard them, cold repell'd? 1015
 How much men think me abject, void of heart,
 While all this time I bear to linger on
 In this blood-deluged palace, in whose halls
 Either a vengeful Fury I should stalk,
 Or else not live at all—but here I haunt, 1020
 A pale, unmeaning ghost, powerless to fright
 Or harm, and nurse my longing for my son,
 A helpless one, I know it—but the Gods
 Have temper'd me e'en thus, and, in some souls,
 Misery, which rouses others, breaks the spring 1025
 And even now, my son, ah me! my son,
 Fain would I fade away, as I have lived,
Between 996 and 997 1858
 He who was sent hath sped, and now comes back,
 To chuckle with his sender o'er the game
 Which foolish innocence plays with subtle guilt.
 997 1858 Ah! now I comprehend the liberal grace 1016 *First inserted*
in 1885

MEROPE

Without a cry, a struggle, or a blow,
 All vengeance unattempted, and descend
 To the invisible plains, to roam with thee, 1030
 Fit denizen, the lampless under-world——
 But with what eyes should I encounter there
 My husband, wandering with his stern compeers,
 Amphiaraios, or Mycenæ's king,
 Who led the Greeks to Ilium, Agamemnon, 1035
 Betray'd like him, but, not like him, avenged?
 Or with what voice shall I the questions meet
 Of my two elder sons, slain long ago,
 Who sadly ask me, what, if not revenge,
 Kept me, their mother, from their side so long? 1040
 Or how reply to thee, my child last-born,
 Last-murder'd, who reproachfully wilt say
Mother, I well believed thou lived'st on
In the detested palace of thy foe,
With patience on thy face, death in thy heart, 1045
Counting, till I grew up, the laggard years,
That our joint hands might then together pay
To our unhappy house the debt we owe
My death makes my debt void, and doubles thine——
But down thou fleest here, and leav'st our scourge 1050
Triumphant, and condemnest all our race
To lie in gloom for ever unappeased
 What shall I have to answer to such words?
 No, something must be dared, and, great as erst
 Our dastard patience, be our daring now! 1055
 Come, ye swift Furies, who to him ye haunt
 Permit no peace till your behests are done,
 Come Hermes, who dost friend the unjustly kill'd,
 And can'st teach simple ones to plot and feign,
 Come, lightning Passion, that with foot of fire 1060
 Advancest to the middle of a deed
 Almost before 'tis plann'd, come, glowing Hate,
 Come, baneful Mischief, from thy murky den
 1048 1858 To one unhappy 1058 1858 dost watch

MEROPE

Under the dripping black Tartarean cliff
Which Styx's awful waters trickle down— 1065
Inspire this coward heart, this flagging arm!
How say ye, maidens, do ye know these prayers?
Are these words Merope's—is this voice mine?
Old man, old man, thou had'st my boy in charge,
And he is lost, and thou hast that to atone! 1070
Fly, find me on the instant where confer
The murderer and his impious setter-on—
And ye, keep faithful silence, friends, and mark
What one weak woman can achieve alone

Arcas

O mistress, by the Gods, do nothing rash! 1075

Merope

Unfaithful servant, dost thou, too, desert me?

Arcas

I go! I go!—The King holds council—there
Will I seek tidings. Take, the while, this word
Attempting deeds beyond thy power to do,
Thou nothing profitest thy friends, but mak'st 1080
Our misery more, and thine own ruin sure

[ARCAS goes out

The Chorus

I have heard, O Queen, how a prince, str 1
Agamemnon's son, in Mycenæ,
Orestes, died but in name,
Lived for the death of his foes 1085

Merope

Peace!

The Chorus

What is it?

1077-8 In 1858 one line only I go! I go!—yet, Queen, take this one word

MEROPE

Merope

Alas,

Thou destroyest me!

The Chorus

How?

Merope

Whispering hope of a life
Which no stranger unknown,
But the faithful servant and nurse,
Whose tears warrant his truth,
Bears sad witness is lost

1090

The Chorus

Wheresoe'er men are, there is grief
In a thousand countries, a thousand
Homes, e'en now is there wail,
Mothers lamenting their sons

ant 1

1095

Merope

Yes——

The Chorus

Thou knowest it?

Merope

Thus,

Who lives, witnesses

The Chorus

True

Merope

But is it only a fate
Sure, all-common, to lose
In a land of friends, by a friend,
One last, murder-saved child?

1100

1090 1858 and guard,

MEROPE

The Chorus

Ah me!

str 2.

Merope

Thou confessest the prize
In the rushing, thundering, mad,
Cloud-enveloped, obscure,
Unapplauded, unsung
Race of calamity, mine²

1105

The Chorus

None can truly claim that
Mournful preeminence, not
Thou

1110

Merope

Fate *gives* it, ah me!

The Chorus

Not, above all, in the doubts,
Double and clashing, that hang——

Merope

What then²
Seems it lighter, my loss,
If, perhaps, unpierced by the sword,
My child lies in his jagg'd
Sunless prison of rock,
On the black wave borne to and fro²

ant 2.

1115

The Chorus

Worse, far worse, if his friend,
If the Arcadian within,
If——

1120

Merope (with a start)

How say'st thou² within²

1117 1858 in a jagg'd

1118 1858 of rocks

MEROPE

The Chorus

He in the guest-chamber now,
Faithlessly murder'd his friend

Merope

Ye, too, ye, too, join to betray, then
Your Queen! 1125

The Chorus

What is this?

Merope

Ye knew,
O false friends! into what
Haven the murderer had dropp'd?
Ye kept silence?

The Chorus

In fear,
O loved mistress! in fear, 1130
Dreading thine over-wrought mood,
What I knew, I conceal'd

Merope

Swear by the Gods henceforth to obey me!

The Chorus

Unhappy one, what deed
Purposes thy despair? 1135
I promise, but I fear

Merope

From the altar, the unavenged tomb,
Fetch me the sacrifice-axe!—

[THE CHORUS goes towards the tomb of CRESPHONTES,
and their leader brings back the axe

O Husband, O clothed
With the grave's everlasting, 1140

MEROPE

All-covering darkness! O King,
Well-mourn'd, but ill-avenged!
Approv'st thou thy wife now?—
The axe!—who brings it?

The Chorus

'Tis here!

But thy gesture, thy look,
Appals me, shakes me with awe

1145

Merope

Thrust back now the bolt of that door!

The Chorus

Alas! alas!—
Behold the fastenings withdrawn
Of the guest-chamber door!—
Ah! I beseech thee—with tears—

1150

Merope

Throw the door open!

The Chorus

'Tis done!

[*The door of the house is thrown open the interior of the
guest-chamber is discovered, with ÆPYTUS asleep on
a couch*]

Merope

He sleeps—sleeps calm O ye all-seeing Gods!
Thus peacefully do ye let sinners sleep,
While troubled innocents toss, and lie awake?
What sweeter sleep than this could I desire
For thee, my child, if thou wert yet alive?
How often have I dream'd of thee like this,
With thy soil'd hunting-coat, and sandals torn,
Asleep in the Arcadian glens at noon,

1155
1160

MEROPE

Thy head droop'd softly, and the golden curls
 Clustering o'er thy white forehead, like a girl's,
 The short proud lip showing thy race, thy cheeks
 Brown'd with thine open-air, free, hunter's life
 Ah me! 1165
 And where dost thou sleep now, my innocent boy?—
 In some dark fir-tree's shadow, amid rocks
 Untrodden, on Cyllené's desolate side,
 Where travellers never pass, where only come
 Wild beasts, and vultures sailing overhead 1170
 There, there thou liest now, my hapless child!
 Stretch'd among briars and stones, the slow, black gore
 Oozing through thy soak'd hunting-shirt, with limbs
 Yet stark from the death-struggle, tight-clench'd hands,
 And eyeballs staring for revenge in vain 1175
 Ah miserable!
 And thou, thou fair-skinn'd Serpent! thou art laid
 In a rich chamber, on a happy bed,
 In a king's house, thy victim's heritage,
 And drink'st untroubled slumber, to sleep off 1180
 The toils of thy foul service, till thou wake
 Refresh'd, and claim thy master's thanks and gold —
 Wake up in hell from thine unhallow'd sleep,
 Thou smiling Fiend, and claim thy guerdon there!
 Wake amid gloom, and howling, and the noise 1185
 Of sinners pinion'd on the torturing wheel,
 And the stanch Furies' never-silent scourge
 And bid the chief tormentors there provide
 For a grand culprit shortly coming down.
 Go thou the first, and usher in thy lord! 1190
 A more just stroke than that thou gav'st my son
 Take——

[MEROPE advances towards the sleeping ÆPYTUS, with the
 axe uplifted At the same moment ARCAS re-enters

*Interrupting line 1192 1858 stage direction, second sentence reads At the same
 moment ARCAS returns*

MEROPE

Arcas (to the Chorus)

Not with him to council did the King
Carry his messenger, but left him here

[*Sees MEROPE and ÆPYTUS*

O Gods!

Merope

Foolish old man, thou spoil'st my blow!

Arcas

What do I see?

Merope

A murderer at death's door 1195

Therefore no words!

Arcas

A murderer?

Merope

And a captive

To the dear next-of-kin of him he murder'd
Stand, and let vengeance pass!

Arcas

Hold, O Queen, hold!

Thou know'st not whom thou strik'st

Merope

I know his crime

Arcas

Unhappy one! thou strik'st——

Merope

A most just blow. 1200

MEROPE

Arcas

No, by the Gods, thou slay'st——

Merope

Stand off!

Arcas

Thy son!

Merope

Ah!

[She lets the axe drop, and falls insensible]

Æpytus (awaking)

Who are these? What shrill, ear-piercing scream
Wakes me thus kindly from the perilous sleep
Wherewith fatigue and youth had bound mine eyes,
Even in the deadly palace of my foe?— 1205
Arcas! Thou here?

Arcas (embracing him)

O my dear master! O
My child, my charge beloved, welcome to life!
As dead we held thee, mourn'd for thee as dead

Æpytus

In word I died, that I in deed might live.
But who are these?

Arcas

Messenian maidens, friends. 1210

Æpytus

And, Arcas!—but I tremble!

Arcas

Boldly ask.

MEROPE

Æpytus

That black-robed, swooning figure "

Arcas

Merope

Æpytus

O mother! mother!

Merope

Who upbraids me? Ah!

[*seeing the axe*]

Æpytus

Upbraids thee? no one

Merope

Thou dost well but take

Æpytus

What way'st thou off?

Merope

That murderous axe away! 1215

Æpytus

Thy son is here

Merope

One said so, sure, but now

Æpytus

Here, here thou hast him!

Merope

Slaughter'd by this hand!

MEROPE

Æpytus

No, by the Gods, alive and like to live!

Merope

What, thou?—I dream——

Æpytus

May'st thou dream ever so!

Merope (advancing towards him)

My child? unhurt?

Æpytus

Only by over joy. 1220

Merope

Art thou, then, come?

Æpytus

Never to part again

[*They fall into one another's arms* Then MEROPE, holding
ÆPYTUS by the hand, turns to THE CHORUS

Merope

O kind Messenian maidens, O my friends,
Bear witness, see, mark well, on what a head
My first stroke of revenge had nearly fallen!

The Chorus

We see, dear mistress and we say, the Gods, 1225
As hitherto they kept him, keep him now

Merope

O my son! str
I have, I have thee the years,
Fly back, my child! and thou seem'st
Ne'er to have gone from these eyes, 1230
Never been torn from this breast.

MEROPE

Æpytus

Mother, my heart runs over, but the time
Presses me, chides me, will not let me weep

Merope

Fearest thou now?

Æpytus

I fear not, but I think on my design 1235

Merope

At the undried fount of this breast,
A babe, thou smilest again
Thy brothers play at my feet,
Early-slain innocents! near,
Thy kind-speaking father stands 1240

Æpytus

Remember, to revenge his death I come!

Merope

Ah revenge! ant
That word! it kills me! I see
Once more roll back on my house,
Never to ebb, the accurst 1245
All-flooding ocean of blood

Æpytus

Mother, sometimes the justice of the Gods
Appoints the way to peace through shedding blood

Merope

Sorrowful peace!

Æpytus

And yet the only peace to us allow'd. 1250

MEROPE

Merope

From the first-wrought vengeance is born
A long succession of crimes
Fresh blood flows, calling for blood
Fathers, sons, grandsons, are all
One death-dealing vengeful train 1255

Æpytus

Mother, thy fears are idle, for I come
To close an old wound, not to open new
In all else willing to be taught, in this
Instruct me not, I have my lesson clear —
Arcas, seek out my uncle Laias, now 1260
Conferring in the city with our friends,
Here bring him, ere the king come back from council
That, how to accomplish what the Gods enjoin,
And the slow-ripening time at last prepares,
We two with thee, my mother, may consult, 1265
For whose help dare I count on, if not thine?

Merope

Approves my brother Laias this intent?

Æpytus

Yes, and alone is with me here to share

Merope

And what of thine Arcadian mate, who bears
Suspicion from thy grandsire of thy death, 1270
For whom, as I suppose, thou passest here?

Æpytus

Sworn to our plot he is, if false surmise
Fix him the author of my death, I know not.

1261 1858 Concering in 1267 1858 this design? 1272 1858
but, that surmise 1273 1858 Fix'd him the author of my death, I
knew not

MEROPE

Merope

Proof, not surmise, shows him in commerce close——

Æpytus

With this Messenian tyrant—that I know.

1275

Merope

And entertain'st thou, child, such dangerous friends?

Æpytus

This commerce for my best behoof he plies

Merope

That thou may'st read thine enemy's counsel plain?

Æpytus

Too dear his secret wiles have cost our house

Merope

And of his unsure agent what demands he?

1280

Æpytus

News of my business, pastime, temper, friends

Merope

His messages, then, point not to thy murder?

Æpytus

Not yet, though such, no doubt, his final aim

Merope

And what Arcadian helpers bring'st thou here?

Æpytus

Lairas alone, no errand mine for crowds

1285

Merope

On what relying, to crush such a foe?

MEROPE

Æpytus

One sudden stroke, and the Messenians' love

Merope

O thou long-lost, long seen in dreams alone,
 But now seen face to face, my only child!¹
 Why wilt thou fly to lose as soon as found 1290
 My new-won treasure, thy beloved life?²
 Or how expectest not to lose, who com'st
 With such slight means to cope with such a foe?³
 Thine enemy thou know'st not, nor his strength
 The stroke thou purposest is desperate, rash—
 Yet grant that it succeeds—thou hast behind 1295
 The stricken king a second enemy
 Scarce dangerous less than him, the Dorian lords
 These are not now the savage band who erst
 Follow'd thy father from their northern hills, 1300
 Mere ruthless and uncounsell'd wolves of war,
 Good to obey, without a leader nought
 Their chief hath train'd them, made them like himself,
 Sagacious, men of iron, watchful, firm,
 Against surprise and sudden panic proof 1305
 Their master fall'n, these will not flinch, but band
 To keep their master's power, thou wilt find
 Behind his corpse their hedge of serried spears
 But, to match these, thou hast the people's love?⁴
 On what a reed, my child, thou leanest there! 1310
 Knowest thou not how timorous, how unsure,
 How useless an ally a people is
 Against the one and certain arm of power?⁵
 Thy father perish'd in this people's cause,
 Perish'd before their eyes, yet no man stirr'd! 1315
 For years, his widow, in their sight I stand,
 A never-changing index to revenge—
 What help, what vengeance, at their hands have I?⁶—
 At least, if thou wilt trust them, try them first.

1301 1858 tools of war

MEROPE

Against the King himself array the host	
Thou countest on to back thee 'gainst his lords,	1320
First rally the Messenians to thy cause,	
Give them cohesion, purpose, and resolve,	
Marshal them to an army—then advance,	
Then try the issue, and not, rushing on	1325
Single and friendless, give to certain death	
That dear-beloved, that young, that gracious head	
Be guided, O my son! spurn counsel not!	
For know thou this, a violent heart hath been	
Fatal to all the race of Heracles	1330

The Chorus

With sage experience she speaks, and thou,
 O Æpytus, weigh well her counsel given

Æpytus

Ill counsel, in my judgment, gives she here,	
Maidens, and reads experience much amiss,	
Discrediting the succour which our cause	1335
Might from the people draw, if rightly used,	
Advising us a course which would, indeed,	
If follow'd, make their succour slack and null	
A people is no army, train'd to fight,	
A passive engine, at their general's will,	1340
And, if so used, proves, as thou say'st, unsure.	
A people, like a common man, is dull,	
Is lifeless, while its heart remains untouch'd,	
A fool can drive it, and a fly may scare	
When it admires and loves, its heart awakes	1345
Then irresistibly it lives, it works,	
A people, then, is an ally indeed—	
It is ten thousand fiery wills in one	
Now I, if I invite them to run risk	
Of life for my advantage, and myself,	1350
Who chiefly profit, run no more than they—	
How shall I rouse their love, their ardour so?	

1326 1358 throw to

MEROPE

But, if some signal, unassisted stroke,
 Dealt at my own sole risk, before their eyes,
 Announces me their rightful prince return'd— 1355
 The undegenerate blood of Heracles—
 The daring claimant of a perilous throne—
 How might not such a sight as this revive
 Their loyal passion tow'rd my father's house,
 Kindle their hearts, make them no more a mob, 1360
 A craven mob, but a devouring fire?
 Then might I use them, then, for one who thus
 Spares not himself, themselves they will not spare
 Haply, had but one daring soul stood forth
 To rally them and lead them to revenge, 1365
 When my great father fell, they had replied!
 Alas! our foe alone stood forward then
 And thou, my mother, hadst thou made a sign—
 Hadst thou, from thy forlorn and captive state
 Of widowhood in these polluted halls, 1370
 Thy prison-house, raised one imploring cry—
 Who knows but that avengers thou hadst found?
 But mute thou sat'st, and each Messenian heart
 In thy despondency desponded too
 Enough of this!—Though not a finger stir 1375
 To succour me in my extremest need,
 Though all free spirits in this land were dead,
 And only slaves and tyrants left alive,
 Yet for me, mother, I had liefer die
 On native ground, than drag the tedious hours 1380
 Of a protected exile any more
 Hate, duty, interest, passion call one way,
 Here stand I now, and the attempt shall be.

The Chorus

Prudence is on the other side, but deeds
 Condemn'd by prudence have sometimes gone well 1385
 1360 1858 Electrify their hearts? make them no more
 be dead, 1377 1858

MEROPE

Merope

Not till the ways of prudence all are tried,
And tried in vain, the turn of rashness comes
Thou leapest to thy deed, and hast not ask'd
Thy kinsfolk and thy father's friends for aid

Æpytus

And to what friends should I for aid apply?

1390

Merope

The royal race of Temenus, in Argos——

Æpytus

That house, like ours, intestine murder maims

Merope

Thy Spartan cousins, Procles and his brother——

Æpytus

Love a won cause, but not a cause to win

Merope

My father, then, and his Arcadian chiefs——

1395

Æpytus

Mean still to keep aloof from Dorian broil

Merope

Wait, then, until sufficient help appears

Æpytus

Orestes in Mycenæ had no more

Merope

He to fulfil an order raised his hand

Æpytus

What order more precise had he than 1?

1400

MEROPE

Merope

Apollo peal'd it from his Delphian cave.

Æpytus

A mother's murder needed hest divine

Merope

He had a hest, at least, and thou hast none

Æpytus

The Gods command not where the heart speaks clear.

Merope

Thou wilt destroy, I see, thyself and us 1405

Æpytus

O suffering! O calamity! how ten,
How twentyfold worse are ye, when your blows
Not only wound the sense, but kill the soul,
The noble thought, which is alone the man!
That I, to-day returning, find myself 1410
Orphan'd of both my parents—by his foes
My father, by your strokes my mother slain!
For this is not my mother, who dissuades,
At the dread altar of her husband's tomb,
His son from vengeance on his murderer, 1415
And not alone dissuades him, but compares
His just revenge to an unnatural deed,
A deed so awful, that the general tongue
Fluent of horrors, falters to relate it—
Of darkness so tremendous, that its author, 1420
Though to his act empower'd, nay, impell'd,
By the oracular sentence of the Gods,
Fled, for years after, o'er the face of earth,
A frenzied wanderer, a God-driven man,
And hardly yet, some say, hath found a grave— 1425
With such a deed as *this* thou matchest mine,

MEROPE

Which Nature sanctions, which the innocent blood
Clamours to find fulfill'd, which good men praise,
And only bad men joy to see undone!
O honour'd father! hude thee in thy grave 1430
Deep as thou canst, for hence no succour comes
Since from thy faithful subjects what revenge
Canst thou expect, when thus thy widow fails?
Alas! an adamantine strength indeed,
Past expectation, hath thy murderer built, 1435
For this is the true strength of guilty kings,
When they corrupt the souls of those they rule

The Chorus

Zeal makes him most unjust, but, in good time,
Here, as I guess, the noble Laias comes

Laias

Break off, break off your talking, and depart 1440
Each to his post, where the occasion calls,
Lest from the council-chamber presently
The King return, and find you prating here
A time will come for greetings, but to-day
The hour for words is gone, is come for deeds 1445

Æpytus

O princely Laias! to what purpose calls
The occasion, if our chief confederate fails?
My mother stands aloof, and blames our deed

Laias

My royal sister? but, without some cause, 1450
I know, she honours not the dead so ill

Merope

Brother, it seems thy sister must present,
At this first meeting after absence long,
Not welcome, exculpation to her kin,

MEROPE

Yet exculpation needs it, if I seek,
 A woman and a mother, to avert 1455
 Risk from my new-restored, my only son—
 Sometimes, when he was gone, I wish'd him back,
 Risk what he might, now that I have him here,
 Now that I feed mine eyes on that young face,
 Hear that fresh voice, and clasp that gold-lock'd head, 1460
 I shudder, Laias, to commit my child
 To murder's dread arena, where I saw
 His father and his ill-starr'd brethren fall!
 I loathe for him the slippery way of blood,
 I ask if bloodless means may gain his end 1465
 In me the fever of revengeful hate,
 Passion's first furious longing to imbrue
 Our own right hand in the detested blood
 Of enemies, and count their dying groans—
 If in this feeble bosom such a fire 1470
 Did ever burn—is long by time allay'd,
 And I would now have Justice strike, not me
 Besides—for from my brother and my son
 I hide not even this—the reverence deep,
 Remorseful, tow'rd my hostile solitude, 1475
 By Polyphontes never fail'd-in once
 Through twenty years, his mournful anxious zeal
 To efface in me the memory of his crime—
 Though it efface not that, yet makes me wish
 His death a public, not a personal act, 1480
 Treacherously plotted 'twixt my son and me,
 To whom this day he came to proffer peace,
 Treaty, and to this kingdom for my son
 Heirship, with fair intent, as I believe —
 For that he plots thy death, account it false, 1485

[to ÆPYTUS

Number it with the thousand rumours vain,
 Figments of plots, wherewith intriguers fill
 The enforc'd leisure of an exile's ear
 Immersed in serious state-craft is the King,

MEROPE

Bent above all to pacify, to rule,
Rigidly, yet in settled calm, this realm,
Not prone, all say, averse to bloodshed now —
So much is due to truth, even tow'rds our foe

[to LAIAS

Do I, then, give to usurpation grace,
And from his natural rights my son debar?
Not so! let him—and none shall be more prompt
Than I to help—raise his Messenian friends,
Let him fetch succours from Arcadia, gain
His Argive or his Spartan cousins' aid,
Let him do this, do aught but recommence
Murder's uncertain, secret, perilous game—
And I, when to his righteous standard down
Flies Victory wing'd, and Justice raises *then*
Her sword, will be the first to bid it fall
If, haply, at this moment, such attempt
Promise not fair, let him a little while
Have faith, and trust the future and the Gods
He may, for never did the Gods allow
Fast permanence to an ill-gotten throne —
These are but woman's words—yet, Lias, thou
Despise them not! for, brother, thou and I
Were not among the feuds of warrior-chiefs,
Each sovereign for his dear-bought hour, born,
But in the pastoral Arcadia rear'd,
With Cypselus our father, where we saw
The simple patriarchal state of kings,
Where sire to son transmits the unquestion'd crown,
Unhack'd, unsmirch'd, unbloodied, and have learnt
That spotless hands unshaken sceptres hold
Having learnt this, then, use thy knowledge now

The Chorus

Which way to learn I know not bloody strokes
Are never free from doubt, though sometimes due

1492 1858 to useless bloodshed 1511 1858 thou, like me,
1512 1858 Wert not 1518 1858 hast learnt

MEROPE

Laias

O Merope, the common heart of man
 Agrees to deem some deeds so dark in guilt,
 That neither gratitude, nor tie of race, 1525
 Womanly pity, nor maternal fear,
 Nor any pleader else, shall be indulged
 To breathe a syllable to bar revenge
 All this, no doubt, thou to thyself hast urged—
 Time presses, so that theme forbear I now, 1530
 Direct to thy dissuasions I reply
 Blood-founded thrones, thou say'st, are insecure,
 Our father's kingdom, because pure, is safe
 True, but what cause to our Arcadia gives
 Its privileged immunity from blood, 1535
 But that, since first the black and fruitful Earth
 In the primeval mountain-forests bore
 Pelasgus, our forefather and mankind's,
 Legitimately sire to son, with us,
 Bequeaths the allegiance of our shepherd-tribes, 1540
 More loyal, as our line continues more²—
 How can your Heracleidan chiefs inspire
 This awe which guards our earth-sprung, lineal kings²
 What permanence, what stability like ours,
 Whether blood flows or no, can yet invest 1545
 The broken order of your Dorian thrones,
 Fix'd yesterday, and ten times changed since then²—
 Two brothers, and their orphan nephews, strove
 For the three conquer'd kingdoms of this isle,
 The eldest, mightiest brother, Temenus, took 1550
 Argos, a juggle to Cresphontes gave
 Messenia, to those helpless Boys, the lot
 Worst of the three, the stony Sparta, fell
 August, indeed, was the foundation here!
 What follow'd²—His most trusted kinsman slew 1555
 Cresphontes in Messenia, Temenus
 Perish'd in Argos by his jealous sons,

1524 1858 so horrible

MEROPE

The Spartan Brothers with their guardian strive
Can houses thus ill-seated, thus embroil'd,
Thus little founded in their subjects' love,
Practise the indulgent, bloodless policy 1560
Of dynasties long-fix'd, and honour'd long?
No! Vigour and severity must chain
Popular reverence to these recent lines
Be their first-founded order strict maintain'd— 1565
Their murder'd rulers terribly avenged—
Ruthlessly their rebellious subjects crush'd!
Since policy bids thus, what fouler death
Than thine illustrious husband's to avenge
Shall we select? than Polyphontes, what 1570
More daring and more grand offender find?
Justice, my sister, long demands this blow,
And Wisdom, now thou see'st, demands it too
To strike it, then, dissuade thy son no more,
For to live disobedient to these two, 1575
Justice and Wisdom, is no life at all

The Chorus

The Gods, O mistress dear! the hard-soul'd man,
Who spared not others, bid not us to spare

Merope

Alas! against my brother, son, and friends,
One, and a woman, how can I prevail?— 1580
O brother, thou hast conquer'd, yet, I fear!
Son! with a doubting heart thy mother yields,
May it turn happier than my doubts portend!

Laus

Meantime on thee the task of silence only
Shall be imposed, to us shall be the deed 1585
Now, not another word, but to our act!
Nephew! thy friends are sounded, and prove true

1565 1858 If their first-founded order be maintain'd

MEROPE

Thy father's murderer, in the public place,
 Performs, this noon, a solemn sacrifice,
 Be with him—choose the moment—strike thy blow! 1590
 If prudence counsels thee to go unarm'd,
 The sacrificer's axe will serve thy turn
 To me and the Messenians leave the rest,
 With the Gods' aid—and, if they give but aid
 As our just cause deserves, I do not fear 1595

[ÆPYTUS, LAIAS, and ARCAS go out

The Chorus

O Son and Mother, str 1
 Whom the Gods o'ershadow
 In dangerous trial,
 With certainty of favour!
 As erst they shadow'd 1600
 Your race's founders
 From ir retrievable woe,
 When the seed of Lycaon
 Lay forlorn, lay outcast,
 Callisto and her Boy 1605
 What deep-grass'd meadow ant 1
 At the meeting valleys—
 Where clear-flowing Ladon,
 Most beautiful of waters,
 Receives the river 1610
 Whose trout are vocal,
 The Aroanian stream—
 Without home, without mother
 Hid the babe, hid Arcas,
 The nursling of the dells 1615
 But the sweet-smelling myrtle, str 2
 And the pink-flower'd oleander,
 And the green agnus-castus,
 To the west-wind's murmur,

1590 1858 Go with

MEROPE

Rustled round his cradle,
 And Maia rear'd him
 Then, a boy, he startled,
 In the snow-fill'd hollows
 Of high Cyllenæ,
 The white mountain-birds,
 Or surprised, in the glens,
 The basking tortoises,
 Whose striped shell founded
 In the hand of Hermes
 The glory of the lyre
 But his mother, Callisto,
 In her hiding-place of the thickets
 Of the lentisk and ilex
 In her rough form, fearing
 The hunter on the outlook,
 Poor changeling! trembled
 Or the children, plucking
 In the thorn-choked gullies
 Wild gooseberries, scared her,
 The shy mountain-bear!
 Or the shepherds, on slopes
 With pale-spiked lavender
 And crisp thyme tufted,
 Came upon her, stealing
 At day-break through the dew.
 Once, 'mid those gorges,
 Spray-drizzled, lonely,
 Unclimb'd of man—
 O'er whose cliffs the townsmen
 Of crag-perch'd Nonacris
 Behold in summer
 The slender torrent
 Of Styx come dancing,
 A wind-blown thread—

1620

1625

1630

ant 2.

1635

1640

1645

str 3

1650

1646 1858 the gorges 1648 1858 by man—

MEROPE

By the precipices of Khelmos, 1655
 The fleet, desperate hunter,
 The youthful Arcas, born of Zeus,
 His fleeing mother,
 Transform'd Callisto,
 Unwitting follow'd— 1660
 And raised his spear

Turning, with piteous, ant 3
 Distressful longing,
 Sad, eager eyes,
 Mutely she regarded 1665
 Her well-known enemy
 Low moans half utter'd
 What speech refused her,
 Tears coursed, tears human,
 Down those disfigured, 1670
 Once human cheeks
 With unutterable foreboding
 Her son, heart-stricken, eyed her
 The Gods had pity, made them Stars
 Stars now they sparkle 1675
 In the northern Heaven—
 The guard Arcturus,
 The guard-watch'd Bear

So, o'er thee and thy child, epode
 Some God, Merope, now, 1680
 In dangerous hour, stretches his hand
 So, like a star, dawns thy son,
 Radiant with fortune and joy

[POLYPHONTES comes in

Polyphontes

O Merope, the trouble on thy face
 Tells me enough thou know'st the news which all 1685
 Messenia speaks! the prince, thy son, is dead
 Not from my lips should consolation fall,

MEROPE

To offer that, I come not, but to urge,
 Even after news of this sad death, our league
 Yes, once again I come, I will not take 1690
 This morning's angry answer for thy last
 To the Messenian kingdom thou and I
 Are the sole claimants left, what cause of strife
 Lay in thy son is buried in his grave
 Most honourably I meant, I call the Gods 1695
 To witness, offering him return and power,
 Yet, had he lived, suspicion, jealousy,
 Inevitably had surged up, perhaps,
 'Twixt thee and me—suspicion, that I nursed
 Some ill design against him, jealousy, 1700
 That he enjoy'd but part, being heir to all
 And he himself, with the impetuous heart
 Of youth, 'tis like, had never quite forgone
 The thought of vengeance on me, never quite
 Unclosed his itching fingers from his sword 1705
 But thou, O Merope, though deeply wrong'd,
 Though injured past forgiveness, as men deem,
 Yet hast been long at school with thoughtful time,
 And from that teacher may'st have learn'd, like me,
 That all may be endured, and all forgiv'n— 1710
 Have learn'd, that we must sacrifice the bent
 Of personal feeling to the public weal—
 Have learn'd, that there are guilty deeds, which leave
 The hand that does them guiltless, in a word,
 That kings live for their peoples, not themselves 1715
 This having known, let us a union found
 (For the last time I ask, ask earnestly)
 Based on pure public welfare, let us be
 Not Merope and Polyphontes, foes
 Blood-sever'd, but Messenia's King and Queen! 1720
 Let us forget ourselves for those we rule!
 Speak! I go hence to offer sacrifice

1688 1858 I came 1711 1858 the thirst 1712 1858 personal
 vengeance 1716 1858 having learn'd,

MEROPE

To the Preserver Zeus, let me return
Thanks to him for our amity as well

Merope

Oh had'st thou, Polyphontes, still but kept 1725
The silence thou hast kept for twenty years!

Polyphontes

Henceforth, if what I urge displease, I may
But fair proposal merits fair reply

Merope

And thou shalt have it! Yes, because thou *hast*
For twenty years forborne to interrupt 1730
The solitude of her whom thou hast wrong'd—
That scanty grace shall earn thee this reply —
First, for our union Trust me, 'twixt us two
The brazen-footed Fury ever stalks,
Waving her hundred hands, a torch in each, 1735
Aglow with angry fire, to keep us twain
Now, for thyself Thou com'st with well-cloak'd joy,
To announce the ruin of my husband's house,
To sound thy triumph in his widow's ears,
To bid her share thine unendanger'd throne 1740
To this thou would'st have answer Take it Fly!
Cut short thy triumph, seeming at its height,
Fling off thy crown, supposed at last secure,
Forsake this ample, proud Messenian realm,
To some small, humble, and unnoted strand, 1745
Some rock more lonely than that Lemnian isle
Where Philoctetes pined, take ship and flee!
Some solitude more inaccessible
Than the ice-bastion'd Caucasian Mount
Chosen a prison for Prometheus, climb! 1750
There in unvoiced oblivion sink thy name,
And bid the sun, thine only visitant,

1751 1858 hide thy

MEROPE

Divulge not to the far-off world of men
What once-famed wretch he there did espy hid
There nurse a late remorse, and thank the Gods, 1755
And thank thy bitterest foe, that, having lost
All things but life, thou lose not life as well

Polyphontes

What mad bewilderment of grief is this?

Merope

Thou art bewilder'd, the sane head is mine

Polyphontes

I pity thee, and wish thee calmer mind 1760

Merope

Pity thyself, none needs compassion more

Polyphontes

Yet, oh! could'st thou but act as reason bids!

Merope

And in my turn I wish the same for thee

Polyphontes

All I could do to soothe thee has been tried

Merope

For that, in this my warning, thou art paid 1765

Polyphontes

Know'st thou then aught, that thus thou sound'st the alarm?

Merope

Thy crime! that were enough to make one fear

• *Polyphontes*

My deed is of old date, and long atoned

1754 1858 he hath seen lurking there.

MEROPE

Merope

Atoned this very day, perhaps, it is

Polyphontes

My final victory proves the Gods appeased 1770

Merope

O victor, victor, trip not at the goal!

Polyphontes

Hatred and passionate envy blind thine eyes

Merope

O Heaven-abandon'd wretch, that envies thee!

Polyphontes

Thou hold'st so cheap, then, the Messenian crown?

Merope

I think on what the future hath in store 1775

Polyphontes

To-day I reign, the rest I leave to Fate

Merope

For Fate thou wait'st not long, since, in this hour——

Polyphontes

What? for so far Fate hath not proved my foe——

Merope

Fate seals my lips, and drags to ruin thee

Polyphontes

Enough! enough! I will no longer hear 1780
The ill-boding note which frantic hatred sounds

1778 1858 she hath

1781 1858 Envy sounds

MEROPE

To affright a fortune which the Gods secure
 Once more my friendship thou rejectest, well!
 More for this land's sake grieve I, than mine own
 I chafe not with thee, that thy hate endures, 1785
 Nor bend myself too low, to make it yield
 What I have done is done, by my own deed,
 Neither exulting nor ashamed, I stand
 Why should this heart of mine set mighty store
 By the construction and report of men? 1790
 Not men's good word hath made me what I am
 Alone I master'd power, and alone,
 Since so thou wilt, I dare maintain it still

[POLYPHONTES goes out

The Chorus

Did I then waver str 1
 (O woman's judgment!) 1795
 Misled by seeming
 Success of crime?
 And ask, if sometimes
 The Gods, perhaps, allow'd you,
 O lawless daring of the strong, 1800
 O self-will recklessly indulged?
 Not time, not lightning, ant 1
 Not rain, not thunder,
 Efface the endless
 Decrees of Heaven— 1805
 Make justice alter,
 Revoke, assuage her sentence,
 Which dooms dread ends to dreadful deeds,
 And violent deaths to violent men.
 But the signal example str 2 1810
 Of invariableness of justice
 Our glorious founder
 Heracles gave us,
 Son loved of Zeus his father—for he sinn'd,
 1793 1858 will maintain 1814 1858 he err'd,

MEROPE

And the strand of Eubœa, ant 2 1815
 And the promontory of Cenæum,
 His painful, solemn
 Punishment witness'd,
 Beheld his expiation—for he died

O villages of Œta str 3 1820
 With hedges of the wild rose!
 O pastures of the mountain,
 Of short grass, beaded with dew,
 Between the pine-woods and the cliffs!
 O cliffs, left by the eagles, 1825
 On that morn, when the smoke-cloud
 From the oak-built, fiercely-burning pyre,
 Up the precipices of Trachis,
 Drove them screaming from their eyries!
 A willing, a willing sacrifice on that day 1830
 Ye witness'd, ye mountain lawns,
 When the shirt-wrapt, poison-blister'd Hero
 Ascended, with undaunted heart,
 Living, his own funeral-pile,
 And stood, shouting for a fiery torch, 1835
 And the kind, chance-arrived Wanderer,³⁰
 The inheritor of the bow,
 Coming swiftly through the sad Trachinians,
 Put the torch to the pile
 That the flame tower'd on high to the Heaven; 1840
 Bearing with it, to Olympus,
 To the side of Hebe,
 To immortal delight,
 The labour-released Hero

O heritage of Neleus, ant 3 1845
 Ill-kept by his infirm heirs!
 O kingdom of Messenê,
 Of rich soil, chosen by craft,
 Possess'd in hatred, lost in blood!
 O town, high Stenyclaros, 1850

MEROPE

With new walls, which the victors
 From the four-town'd, mountain-shadow'd Doris,
 For their Heracles-issued princes
 Built in strength against the vanquish'd!
 Another, another sacrifice on this day 1855
 Ye witness, ye new-built towers!
 When the white-robed, garland-crowned Monarch
 Approaches, with undoubting heart,
 Living, his own sacrifice-block,
 And stands, shouting for a slaughterous axe, 1860
 And the stern, destiny-brought Stranger,
 The inheritor of the realm,
 Coming swiftly through the jocund Dorians,
 Drives the axe to its goal
 That the blood rushes in streams to the dust, 1865
 Bearing with it, to Erinnyes,
 To the Gods of Hades,
 To the dead unavenged,
 The fiercely-required Victim

Knowing he did it, unknowing pays for it. [epode.
 Unknowing, unknowing, 1871
 Thinking atoned-for
 Deeds unattonable,
 Thinking appeased
 Gods unappeasable, 1875
 Lo, the ill-fated one,
 Standing for harbour
 Right at the harbour-mouth
 Strikes with all sail set
 Full on the sharp-pointed 1880
 Needle of ruin!

[A MESSENGER comes in.

Messenger

O honour'd Queen, O faithful followers
 Of your dead master's line, I bring you news

MEROPE

To make the gates of this long-mournful house
Leap, and fly open of themselves for joy! 1885

[noise and shouting heard]

Hark how the shouting crowds tramp hitherward
With glad acclaim! Ere they forestall my news,
Accept it —Polyphontes is no more

Merope

Is my son safe? that question bounds my care

Messenger

He is, and by the people hail'd for king 1890

Merope

The rest to me is little, yet, since that
Must from some mouth be heard, relate it thou

Messenger

Not little, if thou saw'st what love, what zeal,
At thy dead husband's name the people show
For when this morning in the public square 1895
I took my stand, and saw the unarm'd crowds
Of citizens in holiday attire,

Women and children intermix'd, and then,
Group'd around Zeus's altar, all in arms,
Serried and grim, the ring of Dorian lords— 1900

I trembled for our prince and his attempt
Silence and expectation held us all,
Till presently the King came forth, in robe
Of sacrifice, his guards clearing the way
Before him—at his side, the prince, thy son, 1905

Unarm'd and travel-soil'd, just as he was
With him conferring the King slowly reach'd
The altar in the middle of the square,
Where, by the sacrificing minister,
The flower-dress'd victim stood—a milk-white bull, 1910
Swaying from side to side his massy head

MEROPE

With short impatient lowings There he stopp'd,
 And seem'd to muse awhile, then raised his eyes
 To heaven, and laid his hand upon the steer,
 And cried *O Zeus, let what blood-guiltiness* 1915
Yet stains our land be by this blood wash'd out,
And grant henceforth to the Messenians peace!
 That moment, while with upturn'd eyes he pray'd,
 The prince snatch'd from the sacrificer's hand
 The axe, and on the forehead of the King, 1920
 Where twines the chaplet, dealt a mighty blow
 Which fell'd him to the earth, and o'er him stood,
 And shouted *Since by thee defilement came,*
What blood so meet as thine to wash it out?
What hand to strike thee meet as mine, the hand 1925
Of Æpytus, thy murder'd master's son?—
 But, gazing at him from the ground, the King
Is it, then, thou? he murmur'd, and with that,
 He bow'd his head, and deeply groan'd, and died
 Till then we all seem'd stone, but then a cry 1930
 Broke from the Dorian lords, forward they rush'd
 To circle the prince round—when suddenly
 Latas in arms sprang to his nephew's side,
 Crying *O ye Messenians, will ye leave*
The son to perish as ye left the sire? 1935
 And from that moment I saw nothing clear,
 For from all sides a deluge, as it seem'd
 Burst o'er the altar and the Dorian lords,
 Of holiday-clad citizens transform'd
 To armed warriors,—I heard vengeful cries, 1940
 I heard the clash of weapons, then I saw
 The Dorians lying dead, thy son hail'd king
 And, truly, one who sees, what seem'd so strong,
 The power of this tyrant and his lords,
 Melt like a passing smoke, a nightly dream, 1945
 At one bold word, one enterprising blow—
 Might ask, why we endured their yoke so long,
 But that we know how every perilous feat

MEROPE

Of daring, easy as it seems when done,
Is easy at no moment but the right 1950

The Chorus

Thou speakest well, but here, to give our eyes
Authentic proof of what thou tell'st our ears,
The conquerors, with the King's dead body, come

[ÆPYTUS, LAIAS, and ARCAS come in with the dead body
of POLYPHONTES, followed by a crowd of the MES-
SENIANS

Laias

Sister, from this day forth thou art no more
The widow of a husband unavenged, 1955
The anxious mother of an exiled son
Thine enemy is slain, thy son is king!
Rejoice with us! and trust me, he who wish'd
Welfare to the Messenian state, and calm,
Could find no way to found them sure as this 1960

Æpytus

Mother, all these approve me, but if thou
Approve not too, I have but half my joy.

Merope

O Æpytus, my son, behold, behold
This iron man, my enemy and thine,
This politic sovereign, lying at our feet, 1965
With blood-bespatter'd robes, and chaplet shorn!
Inscrutable as ever, see, it keeps
Its sombre aspect of majestic care,
Of solitary thought, unshared resolve,
Even in death, that countenance austere! 1970
So look'd he, when to Stenyclaros first,
A new-made wife, I from Arcadia came,
And found him at my husband's side, his friend,
His kinsman, his right hand in peace and war,

MEROPE

Unsparing in his service of his toil,
 His blood—to me, for I confess it, kind,
 So look'd he in that dreadful day of death,
 So, when he pleaded for our league but now
 What meantest thou, O Polyphontes, what
 Desired'st thou, what truly spurr'd thee on?
 Was policy of state, the ascendancy
 Of the Heracleidan conquerors, as thou said'st,
 Indeed thy lifelong passion and sole aim?
 Or did'st thou but, as cautious schemers use,
 Cloak thine ambition with these specious words?
 I know not, just, in either case, the stroke
 Which laid thee low, for blood requires blood,
 But yet, not knowing this, I triumph not
 Over thy corpse—triumph not, neither mourn,—
 For I find worth in thee, and badness too
 What mood of spirit, therefore, shall we call
 The true one of a man—what way of life
 His fix'd condition and perpetual walk?
 None, since a twofold colour reigns in all
 But thou, my son, study to make prevail
 One colour in thy life, the hue of truth,
 That justice, that sage order, not alone
 Natural vengeance, may maintain thine act,
 And make it stand indeed the will of Heaven
 Thy father's passion was this people's ease,
 This people's anarchy, thy foe's pretence
 As the chiefs rule, my son, the people are
 Unhappy people, where the chiefs themselves
 Are, like the mob, vicious and ignorant!
 So rule! that even thine enemies may fail
 To find in thee a fault whereon to found,
 Of tyrannous harshness, or remissness weak—
 So rule, that as thy father thou be loved!
 So rule, that as his foe thou be obey'd!
 Take these, my son, over thine enemy's corpse

2002 1858 rule, indeed, the 2009 1858 thy foe

MEROPE

Thy mother's prayers! and this prayer last of all
That even in thy victory thou show,
Mortal, the moderation of a man

Æpytus

O mother, my best diligence shall be
In all by thy experience to be ruled 2015
Where my own youth falls short! But, Laias, now,
First work after such victory, let us go
To render to my true Messenians thanks,
To the Gods grateful sacrifice, and then,
Assume the ensigns of my father's power 2020

The Chorus

Son of Cresphontes, past what perils
Com'st thou, guided safe, to thy home!
What things daring! what enduring!
And all this by the will of the Gods

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

A DRAMATIC POEM

[First published 1852 Fragments reprinted 1853, '54, '55, '57 Reprinted entire 1867 and thereafter]

PERSONS

EMPEDOCLES

PAUSANIAS, a Physician

CALLICLES, a young Harp-player

The Scene of the Poem is on Mount Etna, at first in the forest region, afterwards on the summit of the mountain

ACT I SCENE I

Morning A Pass in the forest region of Etna

CALLICLES

(Alone, resting on a rock by the path)

THE mules, I think, will not be here this hour,
They feel the cool wet turf under their feet
By the stream-side, after the dusty lanes
In which they have toil'd all night from Catana,
And scarcely will they budge a yard O Pan, 5
How gracious is the mountain at this hour!
A thousand times have I been here alone,
Or with the revellers from the mountain-towns,
But never on so fair a morn,—the sun
Is shining on the brilliant mountain-crests, 10
And on the highest pines, but farther down,
Here in the valley, is in shade, the sward
Is dark, and on the stream the mist still hangs,
One sees one's footprints crush'd in the wet grass,
One's breath curls in the air, and on these pines 15
That climb from the stream's edge, the long grey tufts,

1852-77 after First Act First Scene *A Pass in the forest region of Etna*
Morning 11 1852-68 further

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Which the goats love, are jewell'd thick with dew.
 Here will I stay till the slow litter comes
 I have my harp too—that is well —Apollo!
 What mortal could be sick or sorry here? 20
 I know not in what mind Empedocles,
 Whose mules I follow'd, may be coming up,
 But if, as most men say, he is half mad
 With exile, and with brooding on his wrongs,
 Pausanias, his sage friend, who mounts with him, 25
 Could scarce have lighted on a lovelier cure
 The mules must be below, far down I hear
 Their tinkling bells, mix'd with the song of birds,
 Rise faintly to me—now it stops!—Who's here?
 Pausanias! and on foot? alone?

Pausanias

And thou, then? 30
 I left thee supping with Peisianax,
 With thy head full of wine, and thy hair crown'd,
 Touching thy harp as the whim came on thee,
 And praised and spoil'd by master and by guests
 Almost as much as the new dancing-girl 35
 Why hast thou follow'd us?

Callicles

The night was hot,
 And the feast past its prime, so we slipp'd out,
 Some of us, to the portico to breathe,—
 Peisianax, thou know'st, drinks late,—and then,
 As I was lifting my soil'd garland off, 40
 I saw the mules and litter in the court,
 And in the litter sate Empedocles,
 Thou, too, wast with him Straightway I sped home,
 I saddled my white mule, and all night long
 Through the cool lovely country follow'd you, 45

31 1852 *Pisianax, and so throughout*

43 1852-68 *went with him*

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Pass'd you a little since as morning dawn'd,
And have this hour sate by the torrent here,
Till the slow mules should climb in sight again.
And now?

Pausanias

And now, back to the town with speed!
Crouch in the wood first, till the mules have pass'd, 50
They do but halt, they will be here anon
Thou must be viewless to Empedocles,
Save mine, he must not meet a human eye
One of his moods is on him that thou know'st,
I think, thou wouldst not vex him

Callicles

No—and yet 55
I would fain stay, and help thee tend him Once
He knew me well, and would oft notice me,
And still, I know not how, he draws me to him,
And I could watch him with his proud sad face,
His flowing locks and gold-encircled brow 60
And kingly gait, for ever, such a spell
In his severe looks, such a majesty
As drew of old the people after him,
In Agrigentum and Olympia,
When his star reign'd, before his banishment, 65
Is potent still on me in his decline
But oh! Pausanias, he is changed of late,
There is a settled trouble in his air
Admits no momentary brightening now,
And when he comes among his friends at feasts, 70
'Tis as an orphan among prosperous boys
Thou know'st of old he loved this harp of mine,
When first he sojourn'd with Peisianax,
He is now always moody, and I fear him,
But I would serve him, soothe him, if I could, 75
Dared one but try

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Pausanias

Thou wast a kind child ever!

He loves thee, but he must not see thee now
 Thou hast indeed a rare touch on thy harp,
 He loves that in thee, too;—there was a time
 (But that is pass'd), he would have paid thy strain 80
 With music to have drawn the stars from heaven
 He hath his harp and laurel with him still,
 But he has laid the use of music by,
 And all which might relax his settled gloom
 Yet thou may'st try thy playing, if thou wilt— 85
 But thou must keep unseen, follow us on,
 But at a distance! in these solitudes,
 In this clear mountain-air, a voice will rise,
 Though from afar, distinctly, it may soothe him
 Play when we halt, and, when the evening comes 90
 And I must leave him (for his pleasure is
 To be left musing these soft nights alone
 In the high unfrequented mountain-spots),
 Then watch him, for he ranges swift and far,
 Sometimes to Etna's top, and to the cone, 95
 But hide thee in the rocks a great way down,
 And try thy noblest strains, my Callicles,
 With the sweet night to help thy harmony!
 Thou wilt earn my thanks sure, and perhaps his

Callicles

More than a day and night, Pausanias, 100
 Of this fair summer-weather, on these hills,
 Would I bestow to help Empedocles
 That needs no thanks, one is far better here
 Than in the broiling city in these heats
 But tell me, how hast thou persuaded him 105
 In this his present fierce, man-hating mood,
 To bring thee out with him alone on Etna?

76 1852, 1867 wert 82 1852-81 He has his harp

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Pausanias

Thou hast heard all men speaking of Pantheia
 The woman who at Agrigentum lay
 Thirty long days in a cold trance of death, 110
 And whom Empedocles call'd back to life
 Thou art too young to note it, but his power
 Swells with the swelling evil of this time,
 And holds men mute to see where it will rise
 He could stay swift diseases in old days, 115
 Chain madmen by the music of his lyre,
 Cleanse to sweet airs the breath of poisonous streams,
 And in the mountain-chunks inter the winds
 This he could do of old, but now, since all
 Clouds and grows daily worse in Sicily, 120
 Since broils tear us in twain, since this new swarm
 Of sophists has got empire in our schools
 Where he was paramount, since he is banish'd
 And lives a lonely man in triple gloom—
 He grasps the very reins of life and death 125
 I ask'd him of Pantheia yesterday,
 When we were gather'd with Peisianax,
 And he made answer, I should come at night
 On Etna here, and be alone with him,
 And he would tell me, as his old, tried friend, 130
 Who still was faithful, what might profit me,
 That is, the secret of this miracle

Callicles

Bah! Thou a doctor! Thou art superstitious
 Simple Pausanias, 'twas no miracle!
 Pantheia, for I know her kinsmen well, 135
 Was subject to these trances from a girl
 Empedocles would say so, did he deign,
 But he still lets the people, whom he scorns,
 Gape and cry *wizard* at him, if they list

108 1852 Pantheia, and so throughout

139 1852-69 cry wizard

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

But thou, thou art no company for him! 140
 Thou art as cross, as sour'd as himself!
 Thou hast some wrong from thine own citizens,
 And then thy friend is banish'd, and on that,
 Straightway thou fallest to arraign the times,
 As if the sky was impious not to fall 145
 The sophists are no enemies of his,
 I hear, Gorgias, their chief, speaks nobly of him,
 As of his gifted master, and once friend
 He is too scornful, too high-wrought, too bitter
 'Tis not the times, 'tis not the sophists vex him, 150
 There is some root of suffering in himself,
 Some secret and unfollow'd vein of woe,
 Which makes the time look black and sad to him
 Pester him not in this his sombre mood
 With questionings about an idle tale, 155
 But lead him through the lovely mountain-paths,
 And keep his mind from preying on itself,
 And talk to him of things at hand and common,
 Not miracles! thou art a learned man,
 But credulous of fables as a girl 160

Pausanias

And thou, a boy whose tongue outruns his knowledge,
 And on whose lightness blame is thrown away
 Enough of this! I see the litter wind
 Up by the torrent-side, under the pines
 I must rejoin Empedocles Do thou 165
 Crouch in the brushwood till the mules have pass'd,
 Then play thy kind part well Farewell till night!

153 1852 the times

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

SCENE II

*Noon A Glen on the highest skirts of the woody region
of Etna*

EMPEDOCLES—PAUSANIAS

Pausanias

The noon is hot When we have cross'd the stream,
We shall have left the woody tract, and come
Upon the open shoulder of the hill
See how the giant spires of yellow bloom
Of the sun-loving gentian, in the heat,
Are shining on those naked slopes like flame!
Let us rest here, and now, Empedocles,
Pantheia's history!

5

[A harp-note below is heard]

Empedocles

Hark! what sound was that
Rose from below? If it were possible,
And we were not so far from human haunt,
I should have said that some one touch'd a harp
Hark! there again!

10

Pausanias

'Tis the boy Callicles,
The sweetest harp-player in Catana
He is for ever coming on these hills,
In summer, to all country-festivals,
With a gay revelling band, he breaks from them
Sometimes, and wanders far among the glens
But heed him not, he will not mount to us,
I spoke with him this morning. Once more, therefore,
Instruct me of Pantheia's story, Master,
As I have pray'd thee

15

20

Empedocles

That? and to what end?

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Pausanias

It is enough that all men speak of it
 But I will also say, that when the Gods
 Visit us as they do with sign and plague,
 To know those spells of thine which stay their hand 25
 Were to live free from terror

Empedocles

Spells? Mistrust them!
 Mind is the spell which governs earth and heaven
 Man has a mind with which to plan his safety,
 Know that, and help thyself!

Pausanias

But thine own words?
 'The wit and counsel of man was never clear, 30
 Troubles confound the little wit he has'
 Mind is a light which the Gods mock us with,
 To lead those false who trust it

[*The harp sounds again*]

Empedocles

Hist! once more!
 Listen, Pausanias!—Ay, 'tis Callicles,
 I know these notes among a thousand Hark! 35

Callicles

(*Sings unseen, from below*)

The track winds down to the clear stream,
 To cross the sparkling shallows, there
 The cattle love to gather, on their way
 To the high mountain-pastures, and to stay,
 Till the rough cow-herds drive them past, 40
 Knee-deep in the cool ford, for 'tis the last

25 1852-67 of time that stay 1868, 1869 of thine that stay
 26 1852 free'd from terror 29 1852-77 thy own 31 1852-
 69 Troubles confuse 35 1852-81 those notes 36-76 1855
 printed separately as The Harp-player on Etna I The Last Glen.

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Of all the woody, high, well-water'd dells
 On Etna, and the beam
 Of noon is broken there by chestnut-boughs
 Down its steep verdant sides, the air 45
 Is freshen'd by the leaping stream, which throws
 Eternal showers of spray on the moss'd roots
 Of trees, and veins of turf, and long dark shoots
 Of ivy-plants, and fragrant hanging bells
 Of hyacinths, and on late anemones, 50
 That muffle its wet banks, but glade,
 And stream, and sward, and chestnut-trees,
 End here, Etna beyond, in the broad glare
 Of the hot noon, without a shade,
 Slope behind slope, up to the peak, lies bare, 55
 The peak, round which the white clouds play

In such a glen, on such a day,
 On Pelion, on the grassy ground,
 Chiron, the aged Centaur lay,
 The young Achilles standing by 60
 The Centaur taught him to explore
 The mountains, where the glens are dry
 And the tired Centaurs come to rest,
 And where the soaking springs abound
 And the straight ashes grow for spears, 65
 And where the hill-goats come to feed,
 And the sea-eagles build their nest
 He show'd him Phthia far away,
 And said O boy, I taught this lore
 To Peleus, in long distant years! 70
 He told him of the Gods, the stars,
 The tides,—and then of mortal wars,
 And of the life which heroes lead
 Before they reach the Elysian place
 And rest in the immortal mead, 75
 And all the wisdom of his race

50, 1852-5 anemones 73 1852-5 life that

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

The music below ceases, and EMPEDOCLES speaks, accompanying himself in a solemn manner on his harp

The out-spread world to span
A cord the Gods first slung,
And then the soul of man
There, like a mirror, hung, 80
And bade the winds through space impel the gusty toy

Hither and thither spins
The wind-borne, mirroring soul,
A thousand glimpses wins,
And never sees a whole, 85
Looks once, and drives elsewhere, and leaves its last employ

The Gods laugh in their sleeve
To watch man doubt and fear,
Who knows not what to believe
Since he sees nothing clear, 90
And dares stamp nothing false where he finds nothing sure

Is this, Pausanias, so?²
And can our souls not strive,
But with the winds must go,
And hurry where they drive?³ 95
Is fate indeed so strong, man's strength indeed so poor?⁴

I will not judge That man,
Howbeit, I judge as lost,
Whose mind allows a plan,
Which would degrade it most, 100
And he treats doubt the best who tries to see least ill

Be not, then, fear's blind slave!
Thou art my friend, to thee,
All knowledge that I have,
All skill I wield, are free 105
Ask not the latest news of the last miracle,

77 1852 The howling void to span

90 1852 Where he sees

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Ask not what days and nights
 In trance Pantheia lay,
 But ask how thou such sights
 May'st see without dismay, 110
 Ask what most helps when known, thou son of Anchitus!

 What² hate, and awe, and shame
 Fill thee to see our time,
 Thou feelest thy soul's frame
 Shaken and out of chime² 115
 What² life and chance go hard with thee too, as with us,

 Thy citizens, 'tis said,
 Envy thee and oppress,
 Thy goodness no men aid,
 All strive to make it less, 120
 Tyranny, pride, and lust, fill Sicily's abodes,

 Heaven is with earth at strife,
 Signs make thy soul afraid,
 The dead return to life,
 Rivers are dried, winds stay'd, 125
 Scarce can one think in calm, so threatening are the Gods,

 And we feel, day and night,
 The burden of ourselves—
 Well, then, the wiser wight
 In his own bosom delves, 130
 And asks what ails him so, and gets what cure he can.

 The sophist sneers Fool, take
 Thy pleasure, right or wrong
 The pious wail Forsake
 A world these sophists throng 135
 Be neither saint nor sophist-led, but be a man!

113 1852 to see our day 1867-77 to see our world 115 1852
 Shaken and in dismay 1867-77 Shaken and rudely hurt'd
 116 1852-77 life and time go hard

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

These hundred doctors try
 To preach thee to their school
 We have the truth! they cry,
 And yet their oracle, 140
 Trumpet it as they will, is but the same as thine

Once read thy own breast right,
 And thou hast done with fears,
 Man gets no other light,
 Search he a thousand years 145
 Sink in thyself! there ask what ails thee, at that shrine!

What makes thee struggle and rave?
 Why are men ill at ease?—
 'Tis that the lot they have
 Fails their own will to please, 150
 For man would make no murmuring, were his will obey'd

And why is it, that still
 Man with his lot thus fights?—
 'Tis that he makes this *will*
 The measure of his *rights*, 155
 And believes Nature outraged if his will's gainsaid

Couldst thou, Pausanias, learn
 How deep a fault is this,
 Couldst thou but once discern
 Thou hast no *right* to bliss, 160
 No title from the Gods to welfare and repose,

Then thou wouldst look less mazed
 Whene'er of bliss debarr'd,
 Nor think the Gods were crazed
 When thy own lot went hard 165
 But we are all the same—the fools of our own woes!

163 1852, 1867 from bliss

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

For, from the first faint morn
 Of life, the thirst for bliss
 Deep in man's heart is born,
 And, sceptic as he is,
 He fails not to judge clear if this be quench'd or no. 170

Nor is the thirst to blame
 Man errs not that he deems
 His welfare his true aim,
 He errs because he dreams 175
 The world does but exist that welfare to bestow

We mortals are no kings
 For each of whom to sway
 A new-made world up-springs,
 Meant merely for his play, 180
 No, we are strangers here, the world is from of old

In vain our pent wills fret,
 And would the world subdue.
 Limits we did not set
 Condition all we do, 185
 Born into life we are, and life must be our mould

Born into life!—man grows
 Forth from his parents' stem,
 And blends their bloods, as those
 Of theirs are blent in them, 190
 So each new man strikes root into a far fore-time

Born into life!—we bring
 A bias with us here,
 And, when here, each new thing
 Affects us we come near, 195
 To tunes we did not call our being must keep chime

171 1852 if this is
 inserted in 1867

172 1852-81 that thirst

187-96 First

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Born into life!—in vain,
Opinions, those or these,
Unalter'd to retain
The obstinate mind decrees,
Experience, like a sea, soaks all-effacing in.

Born into life!—who lists
May what is false hold dear,
And for himself make mists
Through which to see less clear,
The world is what it is, for all our dust and din.

Born into life!—'tis we,
And not the world, are new,
Our cry for bliss, our plea,
Others have urged it too—
Our wants have all been felt, our errors made before

No eye could be too sound
To observe a world so vast,
No patience too profound
To sort what's here amass'd,
How man may here best live no care too great to explore

But we—as some rude guest
Would change, where'er he roam,
The manners there profess'd
To those he brings from home—

220

We mark not the world's course, but would have *it* take *ours*

The world's course proves the terms
On which man wins content,
Reason the proof confirms—
We spurn it, and invent
A false course for the world, and for ourselves, false powers

197-201 follow 202-6 in 1852

203 1852 false maintain.

205 1852 less plain 221 1852 We mark not the world's ways, but

would have *it* learn *ours* 222 2852 The world proclaims the terms

224 1852 Reason its voice confirms

226 1852 False weakness in the world, and in ourselves

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Riches we wish to get,
 Yet remain spendthrifts still,
 We would have health, and yet
 Still use our bodies ill, 230
 Bafflers of our own prayers, from youth to life's last scenes

We would have inward peace,
 Yet will not look within,
 We would have misery cease,
 Yet will not cease from sin, 235
 We want all pleasant ends, but will use no harsh means,

We do not what we ought,
 What we ought not, we do,
 And lean upon the thought
 That chance will bring us through, 240
 But our own acts, for good or ill, are mightier powers

Yet, even when man forsakes
 All sin,—is just, is pure,
 Abandons all which makes
 His welfare insecure,— 245
 Other existences there are, that clash with ours

Like us, the lightning-fires
 Love to have scope and play,
 The stream, like us, desires
 An unimpeded way, 250
 Like us, the Libyan wind delights to roam at large

Streams will not curb their pride
 The just man not to entomb,
 Nor lightnings go aside
 To give his virtues room, 255
 Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge

244 1852 all that makes 246 1852 which clash 255 1852,
 1867 leave his virtues 256 1852 the wind less rough that blows

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Nature, with equal mind,
Sees all her sons at play,
Sees man control the wind,
The wind sweep man away, 260
Allows the proudly-riding and the foundering bark

And, lastly, though of ours
No weakness spoil our lot,
Though the non-human powers
Of Nature harm us not, 265
The ill deeds of other men make often *our* life dark

What were the wise man's plan?—
Through this sharp, toil-set life,
To work as best he can,
And win what's won by strife — 270
But we an easier way to cheat our pains have found

Scratch'd by a fall, with moans
As children of weak age
Lend life to the dumb stones
Whereon to vent their rage, 275
And bend their little fists, and rate the senseless ground,

So, loath to suffer mute,
We, peopling the void air,
Make Gods to whom to impute
The ills we ought to bear, 280
With God and Fate to rail at, suffering easily.

Yet grant—as sense long miss'd
Things that are now perceived,
And much may still exist
Which is not yet believed— 285
Grant that the world were full of Gods we cannot see,

261 1852-69 the founder'd bark.

269 1852-81 To fight

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

All things the world which fill
 Of but one stuff are spun,
 That we who rail are still,
 With what we rail at, one, 290
 One with the o'erlabour'd Power that through the breadth and
 length

Of earth, and air, and sea,
 In men, and plants, and stones,
 Hath toil perpetually,
 And travails, pants, and moans, 295
 Fain would do all things well, but sometimes fails in strength

And patiently exact
 This universal God
 Alike to any act
 Proceeds at any nod, 300
 And quietly declaims the cursings of himself

This is not what man hates,
 Yet he can curse but this
 Harsh Gods and hostile Fates
 Are dreams! this only is— 305
 Is everywhere, sustains the wise, the foolish elf

Nor only, in the intent
 To attach blame elsewhere,
 Do we at will invent
 Stern Powers who make their care 310
 To embitter human life, malignant Deities,

But, next, we would reverse
 The scheme ourselves have spun,
 And what we made to curse
 We now would lean upon, 315
 And feign kind Gods who perfect what man vainly tries

287 1852 that fill 294 1852 Has toil 295 1852-68 And
 struggles, pants, and moans, 1869 And travails, strives, and moans,
 297 1852 punctually exact 301 1852 patiently declaims

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Look, the world tempts our eye,
 And we would know it all!
 We map the starry sky,
 We mine this earthen ball, 320
 We measure the sea-tides, we number the sea-sands,

We scrutinise the dates
 Of long-past human things,
 The bounds of effaced states,
 The lines of deceased kings, 325
 We search out dead men's words, and works of dead men's hands,

We shut our eyes, and muse
 How our own minds are made,
 What springs of thought they use,
 How righten'd, how betray'd— 330
 And spend our wit to name what most employ unnamed

But still, as we proceed
 The mass swells more and more
 Of volumes yet to read,
 Of secrets yet to explore 335
 Our hair grows grey, our eyes are dimm'd, our heat is tamed,

We rest our faculties,
 And thus address the Gods
 'True science if there is,
 It stays in your abodes! 340
 Man's measures cannot mete the immeasurable All

'You only can take in
 The world's immense design.
 Our desperate search was sin,
 Which henceforth we resign, 345
 Sure only that your mind sees all things which befall'

341 1852 cannot span the illimitable

346 1852-69 *your* mind

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Fools! That in man's brief term
 He cannot all things view,
 Affords no ground to affirm
 That there are Gods who do,
 Nor does being weary prove that he has where to rest 350

Again —Our youthful blood
 Claims rapture as its right,
 The world, a rolling flood
 Of newness and delight,
 Draws in the enamour'd gazer to its shining breast, 355

Pleasure, to our hot grasp,
 Gives flowers after flowers,
 With passionate warmth we clasp
 Hand after hand in ours,
 Now do we soon perceive how fast our youth is spent 360

At once our eyes grow clear!
 We see, in blank dismay,
 Year posting after year,
 Sense after sense decay,
 Our shivering heart is mined by secret discontent, 365

Yet still, in spite of truth,
 In spite of hopes entomb'd,
 That longing of our youth
 Burns ever unconsumed,
 Still hungrier for delight as delights grow more rare 370

We pause, we hush our heart,
 And thus address the Gods
 'The world hath fail'd to impart
 The joy our youth forebodes,
 Fail'd to fill up the void which in our breasts we bear 375

361 1852-69. Nor do we 373 1852-77 And then address

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

'Changeful till now, we still
 Look'd on to something new,
 Let us, with changeless will,
 Henceforth look on to you, 380
 To find with you the joy we in vain here require!

Fools! That so often here
 Happiness mock'd our prayer,
 I think, might make us fear
 A like event elsewhere, 385
 Make us, not fly to dreams, but moderate desire

And yet, for those who know
 Themselves, who wisely take
 Their way through life, and bow
 To what they cannot break, 390
 Why should I say that life need yield but *moderate* bliss?

Shall we, with temper spoil'd,
 Health sapp'd by living ill,
 And judgment all embroil'd
 By sadness and self-will, 395
 Shall ~~we~~ judge what for man is not true bliss or is?

Is it so small a thing
 To have enjoy'd the sun,
 To have lived light in the spring,
 To have loved, to have thought, to have done, 400
 To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes—

That we must feign a bliss
 Of doubtful future date,
 And, while we dream on this,
 Lose all our present state, 405
 And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose?

381 1852-69 in vain here 392 1852 tempers spoil'd, 394 1852
 And judgments 396 1852 high bliss , 401 MS rais'd faithful
 friends, & cut down spiteful foes 402 MS demand a bliss *with*
 must claim some bliss *as alternative reading* 404 MS dream of this
 406 MS And clasp conjectured joys, or dread conjectured woes. *with*
 (as alternative reading) And kiss conjectured joys, or fear conjectured woes

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Not much, I know, you prize
 What pleasures may be had,
 Who look on life with eyes
 Estranged, like mine, and sad,
 And yet the village-churl feels the truth more than you, 410

Who's loath to leave this life
 Which to him little yields—
 His hard-task'd sunburnt wife,
 His oftēn-labour'd fields,
 The boors with whom he talk'd, the country-spots he knew 415

But thou, because thou hear'st
 Men scoff at Heaven and Fate,
 Because the Gods thou fear'st
 Fail to make blest thy state,
 Tremblest, and wilt not dare to trust the joys there are! 420

I say Fear not! Life still
 Leaves human effort scope
 But, since life teems with ill,
 Nurse no extravagant hope,
 Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not then despair! 425

*A long pause At the end of it the notes of a harp below are
 again heard, and CALLICLES sings —*

Far, far from here,
 The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
 Among the green Illyrian hills, and there
 The sunshine in the happy glens is fair, 430
 And by the sea, and in the brakes
 The grass is cool, the sea-side air
 Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
 More virginal and sweet than ours

407 MS Not much thou knowest I prize with (as alternative reading) not
 overmuch I prize 409 MS Who strive to see 410 MS
 Not eager, nor not sad 411 MS But then I say (only)
 427-60 1853, 1854, 1857, 1878, 1880 printed separately as Cadmus and
 Harmonia. 434 1852, 1867, 1868, 1869 As virginal and sweet as ours

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

And there, they say, two bright and aged snakes, 435
 Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,
 Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,
 In breathless quiet, after all their ills,
 Nor do they see their country, nor the place
 Where the Sphinx lived among the frowning hills, 440
 Nor the unhappy palace of their race,
 Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more

There those two live, far in the Illyrian brakes!
 They had stay'd long enough to see,
 In Thebes, the billow of calamity 445
 Over their own dear children roll'd,
 Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,
 For years, they sitting helpless in their home,
 A grey old man and woman, yet of old
 The Gods had to their marriage come, 450
 And at the banquet all the Muses sang

Therefore they did not end their days
 In sight of blood, but were rapt, far away,
 To where the west-wind plays,
 And murmurs of the Adriatic come 455
 To those untrodden mountain-lawns, and there
 Placed safely in changed forms, the pair
 Wholly forget their first sad life, and home,
 And all that Theban woe, and stray
 For ever through the glens, placid and dumb 460

Empedocles

That was my harp-player again!—where is he?
 Down by the stream?

Pausanias

Yes, Master, in the wood

Empedocles

He ever loved the Theban story well!
 But the day wears Go now, Pausanias,

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

For I must be alone Leave me one mule, 465
 Take down with thee the rest to Catana
 And for young Callicles, thank him from me,
 Tell him, I never fail'd to love his lyre—
 But he must follow me no more to-night

Pausanias

Thou wilt return to-morrow to the city 470

Empedocles

Either to-morrow or some other day,
 In the sure revolutions of the world,
 Good friend, I shall revisit Catana
 I have seen many cities in my time,
 Till mine eyes ache with the long spectacle, 475
 And I shall doubtless see them all again,
 Thou know'st me for a wanderer from of old
 Meanwhile, stay me not now Farewell, Pausanias!

He departs on his way up the mountain.

Pausanias (alone)

I dare not urge him further—he must go,
 But he is strangely wrought!—I will speed back 480
 And bring Peisianax to him from the city,
 His counsel could once soothe him But, Apollo!
 How his brow lighten'd as the music rose!
 Callicles must wait here, and play to him,
 I saw him through the chestnuts far below, 485
 Just since, down at the stream —Ho! Callicles!

He descends, calling

ACT II

Evening The Summit of Etna

EMPEDOCLES

Alone!—

On this char'd, blacken'd, melancholy waste,

475 1852-69 my eyes

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Crown'd by the awful peak, Etna's great mouth
 Round which the sullen vapour rolls—alone!
 Pausanias is far hence, and that is well, 5
 For I must henceforth speak no more with man.
 He hath his lesson too, and that debt's paid,
 And the good, learned, friendly, quiet man
 May bravelier front his life, and in himself
 Find henceforth energy and heart But I— 10
 The weary man, the banish'd citizen,
 Whose banishment is not his greatest ill,
 Whose weariness no energy can reach,
 And for whose hurt courage is not the cure—
 What should I do with life and living more? 15

No, thou art come too late, Empedocles!
 And the world hath the day, and must break thee,
 Not thou the world With men thou canst not live,
 Their thoughts, their ways, their wishes, are not thine,
 And being lonely thou art miserable, 20
 For something has impair'd thy spirit's strength,
 And dried its self-sufficing fount of joy
 Thou canst not live with men nor with thyself—
 O sage! O sage!—Take then the one way left,
 And turn thee to the elements, thy friends, 25
 Thy well-tried friends, thy willing ministers,
 And say Ye helpers, hear Empedocles,
 Who asks this final service at your hands!
 Before the sophist-brood hath overlaid
 The last spark of man's consciousness with words— 30
 Ere quite the being of man, ere quite the world
 Be disarray'd of their divinity—
 Before the soul lose all her solemn joys,
 And awe be dead, and hope impossible,
 And the soul's deep eternal night come on— 35
 Receive me, hide me, quench me, take me home!

7 1852-81 He has

27 1852-81 Ye servants,

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

He advances to the edge of the crater Smoke and fire break forth with a loud noise, and CALLICLES is heard below singing —

The lyre's voice is lovely everywhere,
In the court of Gods, in the city of men,
And in the lonely rock-strewn mountain-glen,
In the still mountain air

40

Only to Typho it sounds hatefully,
To Typho only, the rebel o'erthrown,
Through whose heart Etna drives her roots of stone
To imbed them in the sea

Wherefore dost thou groan so loud?

45

Wherefore do thy nostrils flash,
Through the dark night, suddenly,
Typho, such red jets of flame?—

Is thy tortured heart still proud?

Is thy fire-scathed arm still rash?

50

Still alert thy stone-crush'd frame?

Doth thy fierce soul still deplore

Thine ancient rout by the Cilician hills,

And that curst treachery on the Mount of Gore?

Do thy bloodshot eyes still weep

55

The fight which crown'd thine ills,

Thy last mischance on this Sicilian deep?

Hast thou sworn, in thy sad lair,

Where erst the strong sea-currents suck'd thee down,

Never to cease to writhe, and try to rest,

60

Letting the sea-stream wander through thy hair?

That thy groans, like thunder prest,

37-88 1855 printed separately as The Harp-player on Etna. II Typho
42 1852-5 Only to Typho, the rebel o'erthrown, 52 1852, 1855
(Harp-player on Etna) Does 53 1852, 1855 Thy ancient rout
1867-9 The ancient rout by the Cilician hills, 53 1855 (Harp-player
on Etna) in the Cilician hills, 55 1852-68 still see 1869 still
flee 56 1852-68 that crown'd thy ills, 57 1852-69 Thy last
defeat in this Sicilian sea? 60 1852-69 try to sleep, 62 1852-
69 like thunder deep,

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Begin to roll, and almost drown
 The sweet notes whose lulling spell
 Gods and the race of mortals love so well, 65
 When through thy caves thou hearest music swell ²

But an awful pleasure bland
 Spreading o'er the Thunderer's face,
 When the sound climbs near his seat,
 The Olympian council sees, 70
 As he lets his lax right hand,
 Which the lightnings doth embrace,
 Sink upon his mighty knees.
 And the eagle, at the beck
 Of the appeasing, gracious harmony, 75
 Droops all his sheeny, brown, deep-feather'd neck,
 Nestling nearer to Jove's feet,
 While o'er his sovran eye
 The curtains of the blue films slowly meet
 And the white Olympus-peaks 80
 Rosily brighten, and the soothed Gods smile
 At one another from their golden chairs,
 And no one round the charmed circle speaks
 Only the loved Hebe bears
 The cup about, whose draughts beguile 85
 Pain and care, with a dark store
 Of fresh-pull'd violets wreathed and nodding o'er,
 And her flush'd feet glow on the marble floor

Empedocles

He fables, yet speaks truth!
 The brave, impetuous heart yields everywhere 90
 To the subtle, contriving head,
 Great qualities are trodden down,
 And littleness united
 Is become invincible

These rumblings are not Typho's groans, I know! 95
 78 1852-69 sovereign eye 90 1852 impetuous hand

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

These angry smoke-bursts
 Are not the passionate breath
 Of the mountain-crush'd, tortured, intractable Titan king—
 But over all the world
 What suffering is there not seen 100
 Of plainness oppress'd by cunning,
 As the well-counsell'd Zeus oppress'd
 That self-helping son of earth!
 What anguish of greatness,
 Rail'd and hurtled from the world, 105
 Because its simplicity rebukes
 This envious, miserable age!

 I am weary of it
 —Lie there, ye ensigns
 Of my unloved preeminence 110
 In an age like this!
 Among a people of children,
 Who throng'd me in their cities,
 Who worshipp'd me in their houses,
 And ask'd, not wisdom, 115
 But drugs to charm with,
 But spells to mutter—
 All the fool's-armoury of magic!—Lie there,
 My golden circlet,
 My purple robe! 120

Callicles (from below)

As the sky-brightening south-wind clears the day,
 And makes the mass'd clouds roll,
 The music of the lyre blows away
 The clouds which wrap the soul

Oh! that Fate had let me see 125
 That triumph of the sweet persuasive lyre,
 That famous, final victory,
 When jealous Pan with Marsyas did conspire,

103 1852-68 The self-helping 121-90 1855 printed separately as
 The Harp-player on Etna. III. Marsyas 124 1852-69 that wrap

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

When, from far Parnassus' side,
 Young Apollo, all the pride 130
 Of the Phrygian flutes to tame,
 To the Phrygian highlands came,
 Where the long green reed-beds sway
 In the rippled waters grey
 Of that solitary lake 135
 Where Mæander's springs are born,
 Whence the ridged pine-wooded roots
 Of Messogis westward break,
 Mounting westward, high and higher
 There was held the famous strife, 140
 There the Phrygian brought his flutes,
 And Apollo brought his lyre,
 And, when now the westering sun
 Touch'd the hills, the strife was done,
 And the attentive Muses said 145
 'Mursyas, thou art vanquished !'
 Then Apollo's minister
 Hang'd upon a branching fir
 Marsyas, that unhappy Faun,
 And began to whet his knife 150
 But the Mænads, who were there,
 Left their friend, and with robes flowing
 In the wind, and loose dark hair
 O'er their polish'd bosoms blowing,
 Each her ribbon'd tambourine 155
 Flinging on the mountain-sod,
 With a lovely frighten'd mien
 Came about the youthful God
 But he turn'd his beauteous face
 Haughtily another way, 160
 From the grassy sun-warm'd place
 Where in proud repose he lay,

137 1852 Where the ridg'd pine-darken'd roots 1855 Whence the
 ridg'd pine-muffled roots 1867-81 Where the ridg'd pine-wooded
 roots

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

With one arm over his head,
Watching how the whetting sped

But aloof, on the lake-strand, 165
Did the young Olympus stand,
Weeping at his master's end,
For the Faun had been his friend
For he taught him how to sing,
And he taught him flute-playing 170
Many a morning had they gone
To the glimmering mountain-lakes,
And had torn up by the roots
The tall crested water-reeds
With long plumes and soft brown seeds, 175
And had carved them into flutes,
Sitting on a tabled stone
Where the shoreward ripple breaks
And he taught him how to please
The red-snooded Phrygian girls, 180
Whom the summer evening sees
Flashing in the dance's whirls
Underneath the starlit trees
In the mountain-villages
Therefore now Olympus stands, 185
At his master's piteous cries
Pressing fast with both his hands
His white garment to his eyes,
Not to see Apollo's scorn,—
Ah, poor Faun, poor Faun! ah, poor Faun! 190

Empedocles

And lie thou there,
My laurel bough!
Scornful Apollo's ensign, lie thou there!
Though thou hast been my shade in the world's heat—
Though I have loved thee, lived in honouring thee— 195

193 First inserted in 1867

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Yet lie thou there,
 My laurel bough!
 I am weary of thee
 I am weary of the solitude
 Where he who bears thee must abide— 200
 Of the rocks of Parnassus,
 Of the gorge of Delphi,
 Of the moonlit peaks, and the caves.
 Thou guardest them, Apollo!
 Over the grave of the slain Pytho, 205
 Though young, intolerably severe!
 Thou keepest aloof the profane,
 But the solitude oppresses thy votary!
 The jars of men reach him not in thy valley—
 But can life reach him? 210
 Thou fencest him from the multitude—
 Who will fence him from himself?
 He hears nothing but the cry of the torrents,
 And the beating of his own heart
 The air is thin, the veins swell, 215
 The temples tighten and throb there—
 Air! air!
 Take thy bough, set me free from my solitude,
 I have been enough alone!
 Where shall thy votary fly then? back to men?— 220
 But they will gladly welcome him once more,
 And help him to unbend his too tense thought,
 And rid him of the presence of himself,
 And keep their friendly chatter at his ear,
 And haunt him, till the absence from himself, 225
 That other torment, grow unbearable,
 And he will fly to solitude again,
 And he will find its air too keen for him,
 And so change back, and many thousand times
 Be miserably bandied to and fro 230

202 1890 (erroneously) Of the rocks of Delphi,

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Like a sea-wave, betwixt the world and thee,
Thou young, implacable God! and only death
Can cut his oscillations short, and so
Bring him to poise There is no other way

And yet what days were those, Parmenides! 235

When we were young, when we could number friends

In all the Italian cities like ourselves,

When with elated hearts we join'd your train,

Ye Sun-born Virgins! on the road of truth ³²

Then we could still enjoy, then neither thought 240

Nor outward things were closed and dead to us,

But we received the shock of mighty thoughts

On simple minds with a pure natural joy,

And if the sacred load oppress'd our brain,

We had the power to feel the pressure eased, 245

The brow unbound, the thoughts flow free again,

In the delightful commerce of the world

We had not lost our balance then, nor grown

Thought's slaves, and dead to every natural joy

The smallest thing could give us pleasure then— 250

The sports of the country-people,

A flute-note from the woods,

Sunset over the sea,

Seed-time and harvest,

The reapers in the corn, 255

The vinedresser in his vineyard,

The village-girl at her wheel

Fulness of life and power of feeling, ye

Are for the happy, for the souls at ease,

Who dwell on a firm basis of content! 260

But he, who has outlived his prosperous days—

But he, whose youth fell on a different world

From that on which his exiled age is thrown—

Whose mind was fed on other food, was train'd

By other rules than are in vogue to-day— 265

233 1852-81 Shall cut

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Whose habit of thought is fix'd, who will not change,
 But, in a world he loves not, must subsist
 In ceaseless opposition, be the guard
 Of his own breast, fetter'd to what he guards,
 That the world win no mastery over him— 270
 Who has no friend, no fellow left, not one,
 Who has no minute's breathing space allow'd
 To nurse his dwindling faculty of joy——
 Joy and the outward world must die to him,
 As they are dead to me 275

*A long pause, during which EMPEDOCLES remains motion-
 less, plunged in thought The night deepens He
 moves forward and gazes round him, and proceeds —*

And you, ye stars,
 Who slowly begin to marshal,
 As of old, in the fields of heaven,
 Your distant, melancholy lines!
 Have you, too, survived yourselves? 280
 Are you, too, what I fear to become?
 You, too, once lived,
 You, too, moved joyfully
 Among august companions,
 In an older world, peopled by Gods, 285
 In a mightier order,
 The radiant, rejoicing, intelligent Sons of Heaven.
 But now, ye kindle
 Your lonely, cold-shining lights,
 Unwilling lingerers 290
 In the heavenly wilderness,
 For a younger, ignoble world,
 And renew, by necessity,
 Night after night your courses,
 In echoing, unneer'd silence, 295
 Above a race you know not—

276-300 1855 printed separately as The Philosopher and the Stars.
 280 1867-9 Have you 281 1867-9 Are you 288 1852-69 you
 kindle

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Uncaring and undelighted,
 Without friend and without home,
 Weary like us, though not
 Weary with our weariness 300

No, no, ye stars! there is no death with you,
 No languor, no decay! languor and death,
 They are with me, not you! ye are alive—
 Ye, and the pure dark ether where ye ride
 Brilliant above me! And thou, fiery world, 305
 That sapp'st the vitals of this terrible mount
 Upon whose charr'd and quaking crust I stand—
 Thou, too, brimmest with life!—the sea of cloud,
 That heaves its white and billowy vapours up
 To moat this isle of ashes from the world, 310
 Lives, and that other fainter sea, far down,
 O'er whose lit floor a road of moonbeams leads
 To Etna's Liparean sister-fires
 And the long dusky line of Italy—
 That mild and luminous floor of waters lives, 315
 With held-in joy swelling its heart, I only,
 Whose spring of hope is dried, whose spirit has fail'd,
 I, who have not, like these, in solitude
 Maintain'd courage and force, and in myself
 Nursed an immortal vigour—I alone 320
 Am dead to life and joy, therefore I read
 In all things my own deadness

A long silence He continues —

Oh, that I could glow like this mountain!
 Oh, that my heart bounded with the swell of the sea!
 Oh, that my soul were full of light as the stars! 325
 Oh, that it brooded over the world like the air!

But no, this heart will glow no more, thou art
 A living man no more, Empedocles!

Nothing but a devouring flame of thought—
 But a naked, eternally restless mind! 330

After a pause —

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

To the elements it came from
 Everything will return—
 Our bodies to earth,
 Our blood to water,
 Heat to fire, 335
 Breath to air
 They were well born, they will be well entomb'd—
 But mind?

And we might gladly share the fruitful stir
 Down in our mother earth's miraculous womb, 340
 Well would it be
 With what roll'd of us in the stormy main,
 We might have joy, blent with the all-bathing air,
 Or with the nimble, radiant life of fire

But mind, but thought— 345
 If these have been the master part of us—
 Where will *they* find their parent element?
 What will receive *them*, who will call *them* home?
 But we shall still be in them, and they in us,
 And we shall be the strangers of the world, 350
 And they will be our lords, as they are now,
 And keep us prisoners of our consciousness,
 And never let us clasp and feel the All
 But through their forms, and modes, and stifling veils.
 And we shall be unsatisfied as now, 355
 And we shall feel the agony of thirst,
 The ineffable longing for the life of life
 Baffled for ever, and still thought and mind
 Will hurry us with them on their homeless march,
 Over the unallied unopening earth, 360
 Over the unrecognising sea, while air
 Will blow us fiercely back to sea and earth,
 And fire repel us from its living waves

341 1867 (*only*) might it be
 343 1852, 1868 should have

342 1852 stormy deep
 344 1852 active, radiant life

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

And then we shall unwillingly return
 Back to this meadow of calamity, 365
 This uncongenial place, this human life,
 And in our individual human state
 Go through the sad probation all again,
 To see if we will poise our life at last,
 To see if we will now at last be true 370
 To our own only true, deep-buried selves,
 Being one with which we are one with the whole world,
 Or whether we will once more fall away
 Into some bondage of the flesh or mind,
 Some slough of sense, or some fantastic maze 375
 Forged by the imperious lonely thinking-power
 And each succeeding age in which we are born
 Will have more peril for us than the last,
 Will goad our senses with a sharper spur,
 Will fret our minds to an intenser play, 380
 Will make ourselves harder to be discern'd
 And we shall struggle awhile, gasp and rebel—
 And we shall fly for refuge to past times,
 Their soul of unworn youth, their breath of greatness,
 And the reality will pluck us back, 385
 Knead us in its hot hand, and change our nature
 And we shall feel our powers of effort flag,
 And rally them for one last fight—and fail,
 And we shall sink in the impossible strife,
 And be astray for ever

Slave of sense 390

I have in no wise been,—but slave of thought? .
 And who can say I have been always free,
 Lived ever in the light of my own soul?—
 I cannot, I have lived in wrath and gloom, 395
 Fierce, disputatious, ever at war with man,
 Far from my own soul, far from warmth and light
 But I have not grown easy in these bonds—
 But I have not denied what bonds these were

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Yea, I take myself to witness,
That I have loved no darkness, 400
Sophisticated no truth,
Nursed no delusion,
Allow'd no fear!

And therefore, O ye elements! I know—
Ye know it too—it hath been granted me 405
Not to die wholly, not to be all enslaved
I feel it in this hour The numbing cloud
Mounts off my soul, I feel it, I breathe free

Is it but for a moment?
—Ah, boil up, ye vapours! 410
Leap and roar, thou sea of fire!
My soul glows to meet you
Ere it flag, ere the mists
Of despondency and gloom
Rush over it again, 415
Receive me, save me!

[He plunges into the crater]

Callicles

(from below)

Through the black, rushing smoke-bursts,
Thick breaks the red flame,
All Etna heaves fiercely
Her forest-clothed frame. 420

Not here, O Apollo!
Are haunts meet for thee
But, where Helicon breaks down
In cliff to the sea,

417-68 1855 printed separately as *The harp-player on Etna* IV Apollo
Also separately in *Selections of 1878* and *1880* as *Apollo Musagetes*.
418 1855 Quick breaks

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

Where the moon-silver'd inlets
Send far their light voice
Up the still vale of Thisbe,
O speed, and rejoice!

On the sward at the cliff-top
Lie strewn the white flocks,
On the cliff-side the pigeons
Roost deep in the rocks

In the moonlight the shepherds,
Soft lull'd by the rills,
Lie wrapt in their blankets
Asleep on the hills

—What forms are these coming
So white through the gloom?
What garments out-glistening
The gold-flower'd broom?

What sweet-breathing presence
Out-perfumes the thyme?
What voices enrapture
The night's balmy prime?—

'Tis Apollo comes leading
His choir, the Nine
—The leader is fairest,
But all are divine

They are lost in the hollows!
They stream up again!
What seeks on this mountain
The glorified train?—

They bathe on this mountain,
In the spring by their road,
Then on to Olympus,
Their endless abode

EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

—Whose praise do they mention?

Of what is it told?—

What will be for ever,

What was from of old

460

First hymn they the Father

Of all things, and then,

The rest of immortals,

The action of men

The day in his hotness,

The strife with the palm,

The night in her silence,

The stars in their calm

465

465 1852, 855 in its hotness,

467 1852, 1855 in its silence,

LATER POEMS

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

JULY 25, 1881

*(The Day of Burial, in the Abbey, of ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY,
Dean of Westminster)*

*[First published in THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, January 1882 Reprinted 1885
and thereafter]*

WHAT^f for a term so scant
Our shining visitant
Cheer'd us, and now is pass'd into the night²
 Couldst thou no better keep, O Abbey old,
 The boon thy dedication-sign foretold,³³ 5
The presence of that gracious inmate, light²—
 A child of light appear'd,
Hither he came, late-born and long-desired,
 And to men's hearts this ancient place endear'd,
What, is the happy glow so soon expired² 10

—Rough was the winter eve,
 Their craft the fishers leave,
And down over the Thames the darkness drew
 One still lags last, and turns, and eyes the Pile
 Huge in the gloom, across in Thorney Isle, 15
King Sebert's work, the wondrous Minster new
 —'Tis Lambeth now, where then
They moor'd their boats among the bulrush stems,
 And that new Minster in the matted fen
The world-famed Abbey by the westering Thames 20

His mates are gone, and he
For must can scarcely see
A strange wayfarer coming to his side—
 Who bade him loose his boat, and fix his oar,
 And row him straightway to the further shore, 25

5 1882 The boon to thy foundation-hour 22 1882 can hardly

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

And wait while he did there a space abide
 The fisher awed obeys,
 That voice had note so clear of sweet command,
 Through pouring tide he pulls, and drizzling haze,
 And sets his freight ashore on Thorney strand 30

The Minster's outlined mass
 Rose dim from the morass,
 And thitherward the stranger took his way
 Lo, on a sudden all the Pile is bright!
 Nave, choir and transept glorified with light, 35
 While tongues of fire on coign and carving play!
 And heavenly odours fair
 Come streaming with the floods of glory in,
 And carols float along the happy air,
 As if the reign of joy did now begin 40

Then all again is dark,
 And by the fisher's bark
 The unknown passenger returning stands
O Saxon fisher! thou hast had with thee
The fisher from the Lake of Galilee— 45
 So saith he, blessing him with outspread hands,
 Then fades, but speaks the while
At dawn thou to King Sebert shalt relate
How his St Peter's Church in Thorney Isle
Peter, his friend, with light did consecrate 50

Twelve hundred years and more
 Along the holy floor
 Pageants have pass'd, and tombs of mighty kings
 Efface the humbler graves of Sebert's line,
 And, as years sped, the minster-aisles divine 55
 Grew used to the approach of Glory's wings
 Arts came, and arms, and law,
 And majesty, and sacred form and fear,
 Only that primal guest the fisher saw,
 Light, only light, was slow to reappear 60

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The Saviour's happy light,
 Wherein at first was dight
 His boon of life and immortality,
 In desert ice of subtleties was spent
 Or drown'd in mists of childish wonderment, 65
 Fond fancies here, there false philosophy!
 And harsh the temper grew
 Of men with mind thus darken'd and astray,
 And scarce the boon of life could struggle through,
 For want of light which should the boon convey 70
 Yet in this latter time
 The promise of the prime
 Seem'd to come true at last, O Abbey old!
 It seem'd, a child of light did bring the dower
 Foreshown thee in thy consecration-hour, 75
 And in thy courts his shining freight unroll'd
 Bright wits, and instincts sure,
 And goodness warm, and truth without alloy,
 And temper sweet, and love of all things pure,
 And joy in light, and power to spread the joy 80
 And on that countenance bright
 Shone oft so high a light,
 That to my mind there came how, long ago,
 Lay on the hearth, amid a fiery ring,
 The charm'd babe of the Eleusinian king—³⁴ 85
 His nurse, the Mighty Mother, will'd it so
 Warm in her breast, by day,
 He slumber'd, and ambrosia balm'd the child,
 But all night long amid the flames he lay,
 Upon the hearth, and play'd with them, and smiled. 90
 But once, at midnight deep,
 His mother woke from sleep,
 And saw her babe amidst the fire, and scream'd

62 1882 Wherewith
 70 1882 lack of light

68 1882 men whose minds were darken'd
 72 1882 That promise 77 1882 instinct

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

A sigh the Goddess gave, and with a frown
 Pluck'd from the fire the child, and laid him down, 95
 Then raised her face, and glory round her stream'd
 The mourning-stole no more
 Mantled her form, no more her head was bow'd,
 But raiment of celestial sheen she wore,
 And beauty fill'd her, and she spake aloud — 100

'O ignorant race of man!
 Achieve your good who can,
 If your own hands the good begun undo²
 Had human cry not marr'd the work divine,
 Immortal had I made this boy of mine, 105
 But now his head to death again is due
 And I have now no power
 Unto this pious household to repay
 Their kindness shown me in my wandering hour³
 —She spake, and from the portal pass'd away 110

The Boy his nurse forgot,
 And bore a mortal lot
 Long since, his name is heard on earth no more
 In some chance battle on Cithæron-side
 The nursling of the Mighty Mother died, 115
 And went where all his fathers went before
 —On thee too, in thy day
 Of childhood, Arthur! did some check have power,
 That, radiant though thou wert, thou couldst but stay,
 Bringer of heavenly light, a human hour³ 120

Therefore our happy guest
 Knew care, and knew unrest,
 And weakness warn'd him, and he fear'd decline
 And in the grave he laid a cherish'd wife,
 And men ignoble harass'd him with strife, 125

96 1882 round her beam'd

124 1882 to the grave he bore

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

And deadly airs his strength did undermine
 Then from his Abbey fades
 The sound beloved of his victorious breath,
 And light's fair nursing stupor first invades,
 And next the crowning impotence of death 130

But hush! This mournful strain,
 Which would of death complain,
 The oracle forbade, not ill-inspired —
 That Patr, whose head did plan, whose hands did forge
 The Temple in the pure Parnassian gorge,³⁵ 135
 Finish'd their work, and then a meed required
 'Seven days,' the God replied,
 'Live happy, then expect your perfect meed!'
 Quiet in sleep, the seventh night, they died
 Death, death was judged the boon supreme indeed 140

And truly he who here
 Hath run his bright career,
 And served men nobly, and acceptance found,
 And borne to light and right his witness hugh,
 What could he better wish than then to die, 145
 And wait the issue, sleeping underground?
 Why should he pray to range
 Down the long age of truth that ripens slow,
 And break his heart with all the baffling change,
 And all the tedious tossing to and fro? 150

For this and that way swings
 The flux of mortal things,
 Though moving inly to one far-set goal —
 What had our Arthur gain'd, to stop and see,
 After light's term, a term of cecity, 155

126 1882 his force 127 1882 And from 129 1882 languor
 first invades 130 1882 And then 136 1882 Had finish'd, and
 a meed of price 145 1882 What can he better crave 153 1882
 one far-off goal.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

A Church once large and then grown strait in soul?
 To live, and see arise,
 Alternating with wisdom's too short reign,
 Folly revived, re-furbish'd sophistries,
 And pullulating rites externe and vain? 160

Ay me! 'Tis deaf, that ear
 Which joy'd my voice to hear,
 Yet would I not disturb thee from thy tomb,
 Thus sleeping in thine Abbey's friendly shade,
 And the rough waves of life for ever laid! 165
 I would not break thy rest, nor change thy doom.

Even as my father, thou—
 Even as that loved, that well-recorded friend—
 Hast thy commission done, ye both may now
 Wait for the haven to work, the let to end 170

And thou, O Abbey grey!
 Predestined to the ray
 By this dear guest over thy precinct shed—
 Fear not but that thy light once more shall burn,
 Once more thine immemorial gleam return, 175
 Though sunk be now this bright, this gracious head!
 Let but the light appear
 And thy transfigured walls be touch'd with flame—
 Our Arthur will again be present here,
 Again from lip to lip will pass his name 180

GEIST'S GRAVE

*[First published in THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW, January 1881 Reprinted in
 collected edition of 1881 and thereafter]*

FOUR years!—and didst thou stay above
 The ground, which hides thee now, but four?
 And all that life, and all that love,
 Were crowded, Geist! into no more?
 164 1882 Here sleeping 173 1882 this dear soul 175 1882
 One day thine 176 1882 sunk is now

GEIST'S GRAVE

Only four years those winning ways, 5
 Which make me for thy presence yearn,
 Call'd thee to pet thee or to praise,
 Dear little friend! at every turn?²

 That loving heart, that patient soul,
 Had they indeed no longer span, 10
 To run their course, and reach their goal,
 And read their homily to man?³

 That liquid, melancholy eye,
 From whose pathetic, soul-fed springs
 Seem'd surging the Virgilian cry,* 15
 The sense of tears in mortal things—

 That steadfast, mournful strain, consoled
 By spirits gloriously gay,
 And temper of heroic mould—
 What, was four years their whole short day?²⁰

 Yes, only four!—and not the course
 Of all the centuries yet to come,
 And not the infinite resource
 Of Nature, with her countless sum

 Of figures, with her fulness vast 25
 Of new creation evermore,
 Can ever quite repeat the past,
 Or just thy little self restore

 Stern law of every mortal lot!
 Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear, 30
 And builds himself I know not what
 Of second life I know not where

 But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
 On us, who stood despondent by,
 A meek last glance of love didst throw, 35
 And humbly lay thee down to die

Sunt lacrimæ rerum! [M A.]

20 MS stay altered to day

GEIST'S GRAVE

Yet would we keep thee in our heart—
Would fix our favourite on the scene,
Nor let thee utterly depart
And be as if thou ne'er hadst been 40

And so there rise these lines of verse
On lips that rarely form them now,
While to each other we rehearse
Such ways, such arts, such looks hadst thou.

We stroke thy broad brown paws again, 45
We bid thee to thy vacant chair,
We greet thee by the window-pane,
We hear thy scuffle on the stair

We see the flaps of thy large ears
Quick raised to ask which way we go, 50
Crossing the frozen lake, appears
Thy small black figure on the snow!

Nor to us only art thou dear
Who mourn thee in thine English home,
Thou hast thine absent master's tear, 55
Dropt by the far Australian foam

Thy memory lasts both here and there,
And thou shalt live as long as we
And after that—thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee 60

Yet, fondly zealous for thy fame,
Even to a date beyond our own
We strive to carry down thy name,
By mounded turf, and graven stone

We lay thee, close within our reach, 65
Here, where the grass is smooth and warm,
Between the holly and the beech,
Where oft we watch'd thy couchant form,

GEIST'S GRAVE

Asleep, yet lending half an ear
To travellers on the Portsmouth road,— 75
There build we thee, O guardian dear,
Mark'd with a stone, thy last abode!

Then some, who through this garden pass,
When we too, like thyself, are clay,
Shall see thy grave upon the grass, 75
And stop before the stone, and say

*People who lived here long ago
Did by this stone, it seems, intend
To name for future times to know
The dachs-hound, Geist, their little friend* 80

POOR MATTHIAS

[First published in MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE, December 1882 Reprinted
1885 and thereafter]

Poor Matthias!—Found him lying
Fall'n beneath his perch and dying¹
Found him stiff, you say, though warm—
All convulsed his little form²
Poor canary! many a year 5
Well he knew his mistress dear,
Now in vain you call his name,
Vainly raise his rigid frame,
Vainly warm him in your breast,
Vainly kiss his golden crest, 10
Smooth his ruffled plumage fine,
Touch his trembling beak with wine.
One more gasp—it is the end!
Dead and mute our tiny friend!
—Songster thou of many a year, 15
Now thy mistress brings thee here,

71 MS, 1881 (*The Fortnightly Review*), 1881 choose we

POOR MATTHIAS

Says, it fits that I rehearse,
Tribute due to thee, a verse,
Meed for daily song of yore
Silent now for evermore 20

Poor Matthias! Wouldst thou have
More than pity? claim'st a slave?
—Friends more near us than a bird
We dismiss'd without a word
Rover, with the good brown head; 25
Great Atossa, they are dead,
Dead, and neither prose nor rhyme
Tells the praises of their prime
Thou didst know them old and grey,
Know them in their sad decay 30
Thou hast seen Atossa sage
Sit for hours beside thy cage,
Thou wouldst chirp, thou foolish bird,
Flutter, chirp—she never stirr'd!
What were now these toys to her? 35
Down she sank amid her fur,
Eyed thee with a soul resign'd—
And thou deemedst cats were kind!
—Cruel, but composed and bland,
Dumb, inscrutable and grand, 40
So Tiberius might have sat,
Had Tiberius been a cat.

Rover died—Atossa too
Less than they to us are you!
Nearer human were their powers, 45
Closer knit their life with ours
Hands had stroked them, which are cold,
Now for years, in churchyard mould,
Comrades of our past were they,
Of that unreturning day 50

18 2882 ask'd by thee,

POOR MATTHIAS

Changed and aging, they and we
Dwelt, it seem'd, in sympathy
Alway from their ptesence broke
Somewhat which remembrance woke
Of the loved, the lost, the young— 55
Yet they died, and died unsung

Geist came next, our little friend,
Geist had verse to mourn his end
Yes, but that enforcement strong
Which compell'd for Geist a song— 60
All that gay courageous cheer,
All that human pathos dear,
Soul-fed eyes with suffering worn,
Pain heroically borne,
Faithful love in depth divine— 65
Poor Matthias, were they thine?

Max and Kaiser we to-day
Greet upon the lawn at play,
Max a dachshound without blot—
Kaiser should be, but is not 70
Max, with shining yellow coat,
Prinking ears and dewlap throat—
Kaiser, with his collie face,
Penitent for want of race
—Which may be the first to die, 75
Vain to augur, they or I?
But, as age comes on, I know,
Poet's fire gets faint and low,
If so be that travel they
First the inevitable way, 80
Much I doubt if they shall have
Dirge from me to crown their grave

Yet, poor bird, thy tiny corse
Moves me, somehow, to remorse,

POOR MATTHIAS

Something haunts my conscience, brings	85
Sad, compunctious visitings	
Other favourites, dwelling here,	
Open lived to us, and near,	
Well we knew when they were glad,	90
Plain we saw if they were sad,	
Joy'd with them when they were gay,	
Soothed them in their last decay,	
Sympathy could feel and show	
Both in weal of theirs and woe	
Birds, companions more unknown,	95
Live beside us, but alone,	
Finding not, do all they can,	
Passage from their souls to man	
Kindness we bestow, and praise,	100
Laud their plumage, greet their lays,	
Still, beneath their feather'd breast,	
Stirs a history unexpress'd	
Wishes there, and feelings strong,	
Incommunicably throng,	105
What they want, we cannot guess,	
Fail to track their deep distress—	
Dull look on when death is nigh,	
Note no change, and let them die	
Poor Matthias! couldst thou speak,	110
What a tale of thy last week!	
Every morning did we pay	
Stupid salutations gay,	
Suited well to health, but how	
Mocking, how incongruous now!	115
Cake we offer'd, sugar, seed,	
Never doubtful of thy need,	
Praised, perhaps, thy courteous eye,	
Praised thy golden livery	
Gravely thou the while, poor dear!	120
Sat'st upon thy perch to hear,	

POOR MATTHIAS

Fixing with a mute regard
 Us, thy human keepers hard,
 Troubling, with our chatter vain,
 Ebb of life, and mortal pain—
 Us, unable to divine 125
 Our companion's dying sign,
 Or o'erpass the severing sea
 Set betwixt ourselves and thee,
 Till the sand thy feathers smirch
 Fallen dying off thy perch! 130

Was it, as the Grecian sings,
 Birds were born the first of things,
 Before the sun, before the wind,
 Before the gods, before mankind,
 Airy, ante-mundane throng— 135
 Witness their unworldly song!
 Proof they give, too, primal powers,
 Of a prescience more than ours—
 Teach us, while they come and go,
 When to sail, and when to sow 140
 Cuckoo calling from the hill,
 Swallow skimming by the mill,
 Swallows trooping in the sedge,
 Starlings swirling from the hedge,
 Mark the seasons, map our year, 145
 As they show and disappear
 But, with all this travail sage
 Brought from that anterior age,
 Goes an unreversed decree
 Whereby strange are they and we, 150
 Making want of theirs, and plan,
 Indiscernible by man

No, away with tales like these
 Stol'n from Aristophanes!³⁶

POOR MATTHIAS

Does it, if we miss your mind,	155
Prove us so remote in kind ²	
Birds! we but repeat on you	
What amongst ourselves we do	
Somewhat more or somewhat less,	
'Tis the same unskilfulness	160
What you feel, escapes our ken—	
Know we more our fellow men ²	
Human suffering at our side,	
Ah, like yours is undescried ¹	
Human longings, human fears,	165
Miss our eyes and miss our ears	
Little helping, wounding much,	
Dull of heart, and hard of touch,	
Brother man's despairing sign	
Who may trust us to divine ²	170
Who assure us, sundering powers	
Stand not 'twixt his soul and ours ²	

Poor Matthias! See, thy end	
What a lesson doth it lend!	
For that lesson thou shalt have,	175
Dead canary bird, a stave!	
Telling how, one stormy day,	
Stress of gale and showers of spray	
Drove my daughter small and me	
Inland from the rocks and sea	180
Driv'n inshore, we follow down	
Ancient streets of Hastings town—	
Slowly thread them—when behold,	
French canary-merchant old	
Shepherding his flock of gold	185
In a low dim-lighted pen	
Scann'd of tramps and fishermen!	
There a bird, high-coloured, fat,	
Proud of port, though something squat—	
Pursy, play'd-out Philistine—	190

POOR MATTHIAS

Dazzled Nelly's youthful eyne
 But, far in, obscure, there stir'd
 On his perch a sprightlier bird,
 Courteous-eyed, erect and slim,
 And I whisper'd 'Fix on *him*!' 195
 Home we brought him, young and fair,
 Songs to trill in Surrey air
 Here Matthias sang his fill,
 Saw the cedars of Pains Hill,
 Here he pour'd his little soul, 200
 Heard the murmur of the Mole
 Eight in number now the years
 He hath pleased our eyes and ears,
 Other favourites he hath known
 Go, and now himself is gone 205
 —Fare thee well, companion dear!
 Fare for ever well, nor fear,
 Tiny though thou art, to stray
 Down the uncompanion'd way!
 We without thee, little friend, 210
 Many years have not to spend,
 What are left, will hardly be
 Better than we spent with thee

KAISER DEAD

APRIL 6, 1887

[First published in THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW, July 1887 Reprinted
in 1890]

WHAT, Kaiser dead? The heavy news
 Post-haste to Cobham calls the Muse,
 From where in Farringford she brews
 The ode sublime,
 Or with Pen-bryn's bold bard pursues 5
 A rival rhyme

KAISER DEAD

Kai's bracelet tail, Kai's busy feet,
Were known to all the village-street.
'What, poor Kai dead?' say all I meet,
 'A loss indeed!' 10
O for the croon pathetic, sweet,
 Of Robin's reed!¹³⁷

Six years ago I brought him down,
A baby dog, from London town,
Round his small throat of black and brown 15
 A ribbon blue,
And vouch'd by glorious renown
 A dachshound true

His mother, most majestic dame,
Of blood-unmix'd, from Potsdam came, 20
And Kaiser's race we deem'd the same—
 No lineage higher
And so he bore the imperial name
 But ah, his sire!

Soon, soon the days conviction bring 25
The collie hair, the collie swing,
The tail's indomitable ring,
 The eye's unrest—
The case was clear, a mongrel thing
 Kai stood confest 30

But all those virtues, which commend
The humbler sort who serve and tend,
Were thine in store, thou faithful friend.
 What sense, what cheer!
To us, declining tow'rd's our end, 35
 A mate how dear!

For Max, thy brother-dog, began
To flag, and feel his narrowing span

KAISER DEAD

And cold, besides, his blue blood ran,
 Since, 'gainst the classes, 40
He heard, of late, the Grand Old Man
 Incite the masses

Yes, Max and we grew slow and sad,
But Kai, a tireless shepherd-lad,
Teeming with plans, alert, and glad 45
 In work or play,
Like sunshine went and came, and bade
 Live out the day!

Still, still I see the figure smart—
Trophy in mouth, agog to start, 50
Then, home return'd, once more depart,
 Or prest together
Against thy mistress, loving heart,
 In winter weather

I see the tail, like bracelet twirl'd, 55
In moments of disgrace uncurl'd,
Then at a pardoning word re-furl'd,
 A conquering sign,
Crying, 'Come on, and range the world,
 And never pine ' 60

Thine eye was bright, thy coat it shone,
Thou hadst thine errands, off and on,
In joy thy last morn flew, anon,
 A fit! All's over,
And thou art gone where Geist hath gone, 65
 And Toss, and Rover

Poor Max, with downcast, reverent head,
Regards his brother's form outspread,
Full well Max knows the friend is dead
 Whose cordial talk, 70
And jokes in doggish language said,
 Beguiled his walk.

KAISER DEAD

And Glory, stretch'd at Burwood gate,
Thy passing by doth vainly wait,
And jealous Jock, thy only hate,
The chiel from Skye,
Lets from his shaggy Highland pate
Thy memory die

75

Well, fetch his graven collar fine,
And rub the steel, and make it shine,
And leave it round thy neck to twine,
Kai, in thy grave
There of thy master keep that sign,
And this plain stave.

80

CANCELLED AND UNCOLLECTED POEMS

ALARIC AT ROME

[*A prize poem recited in Rugby School, June 12, 1840 Published at Rugby the same year Not reprinted by Arnold*]

'Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep, for here
'There is such matter for all feeling'

Childe Harold

I

UNWELCOME shroud of the forgotten dead,
Oblivion's dreary fountain, where art thou
Why speed'st thou not thy deathlike wave to shed
O'er humbled pride, and self-reproaching woe
Or time's stern hand, why blots it not away
The saddening tale that tells of sorrow and decay?

5

II

There are, whose glory passeth not away—
Even in the grave their fragrance cannot fade
Others there are as deathless full as they,
Who for themselves a monument have made
By their own crimes—a lesson to all eyes—
Of wonder to the fool—of warning to the wise

10

III

Yes, there are stories registered on high,
Yes, there are stains time's fingers cannot blot,
Deeds that shall live when they who did them, die,
Things that may cease, but never be forgot
Yet some there are, their very lives would give
To be remembered thus, and yet they cannot live.

15

ALARIC AT ROME

IV

But thou, imperial City¹ that hast stood
In greatness once, in sackcloth now and tears, 20
A mighty name, for evil or for good,
Even in the loneness of thy widowed years
Thou that hast gazed, as the world hurried by,
Upon its headlong course with sad prophetic eye

V

Is thine the laurel-crown that greatness wreathes 25
Round the wan temples of the hallowed dead—
Is it the blighting taint dishonour breathes
In fires undying o'er the guilty head,
Or the brief splendour of that meteor light
That for a moment gleams, and all again is night? 30

VI

Fain would we deem that thou hast risen so high
Thy dazzling light an eagle's gaze should tire,
No meteor brightness to be seen and die,
No passing pageant, born but to expire, 35
But full and deathless as the deep dark hue
Of ocean's sleeping face, or heaven's unbroken blue.

VII

Yet stains there are to blot thy brightest page,
And wither half the laurels on thy tomb,
A glorious manhood, yet a dim old age,
And years of crime, and nothingness, and gloom 40
And then that mightiest crash, that giant fall,
Ambition's boldest dream might sober and appal.

VIII

Thou wondrous chaos, where together dwell
Present and past, the living and the dead,
Thou shattered mass, whose glorious ruins tell 45

ALARIC AT ROME

The vanisht might of that discrowned head
Where all we see, or do, or hear, or say,
Seems strangely echoed back by tones of yesterday:

IX

Thou solemn grave, where every step we tread
Treads on the slumbering dust of other years, 50
The while there sleeps within thy precincts dread
What once had human passions, hopes, and fears,
And memory's gushing tide swells deep and full
And makes thy very ruin fresh and beautiful

X

Alas, no common sepulchre art thou, 55
No habitation for the nameless dead,
Green turf above, and crumbling dust below,
Perchance some mute memorial at their head,
But one vast fane where all unconscious sleep
Earth's old heroic forms in peaceful slumbers deep 60

XI

Thy dead are kings, thy dust are palaces,
Relics of nations thy memorial-stones.
And the dim glories of departed days
Fold like a shroud around thy withered bones
And o'er thy towers the wind's half uttered sigh 65
Whispers, in mournful tones, thy silent elegy

XII

Yes, in such eloquent silence didst thou lie
When the Goth stooped upon his stricken prey,
And the deep hues of an Italian sky
Flasht on the rude barbarian's wild array 70
While full and ceaseless as the ocean roll,
Horde after horde streamed up thy frowning Capitol.

ALARIC AT ROME

XIII

'Twice, ere that day of shame, the embattled foe
Had gazed in wonder on that glorious sight,
Twice had the eternal city bowed her low 75
In sullen homage to the invader's might
Twice had the pageant of that vast array
Swept, from thy walls, O Rome, on its triumphant way

XIV

Twice, from without thy bulwarks, hath the din
Of Gothic clarion smote thy startled ear, 80
Anger, and strife, and sickness are within,
^bFamine and sorrow are no strangers here
Twice hath the cloud hung o'er thee, twice been stayed
Even in the act to burst, twice threatened, twice delayed

XV

Yet once again, stern Chief, yet once again, 85
Pour forth the foaming vials of thy wrath.
There lies thy goal, to miss or to attain,
Gird thee, and on upon thy fateful path,
The world hath bowed to Rome, oh! cold were he
Who would not burst his bonds, and in his turn be free 90

XVI

Therefore arise and arm thee! lo, the world
Looks on in fear! and when the seal is set,
The doom pronounced, the battle-flag unfurled,
Scourge of the nations, wouldest thou linger yet?
Arise and arm thee! spread thy banners forth, 95
Pour from a thousand hills thy warriors of the north!

^a The sieges of Rome by the Goths under Alaric were three in number. The first was commenced A.D. 408, and concluded A.D. 409, by Alaric's accepting a ransom. In the second Alaric entered the city in triumph, and appointed Attalus Emperor. After again degrading this new monarch of his own creation, he finally captured and sacked the city, A.D. 410.

^b 'That unfortunate city gradually experienced the distress of scarcity, and at length the horrid calamities of famine. The miseries of which were succeeded and aggravated by the contagion of a pestilential disease'—*Gibbon*.

ALARIC AT ROME

XVII

Hast thou not marked on a wild autumn day
When the wind slumbereth in a sudden lull,
What deathlike stillness o'er the landscape lay,
How calmly sad, how sadly beautiful, 100
How each bright tint of tree, and flower, and heath
Were mingling with the sere and withered hues of death.

XVIII

And thus, beneath the clear, calm, vault of heaven
In mournful loveliness that city lay,
And thus, amid the glorious hues of even 105
That city told of languor and decay
Till what at morning's hour lookt warm and bright
Was cold and sad beneath that breathless, voiceless night

XIX

Soon was that stillness broken like the cry
Of the hoarse onset of the surging wave, 110
Or louder rush of whirlwinds sweeping by
Was the wild shout those Gothic myriads gave,
As towered on high, above their moonlit road,
Scenes where a Cæsar triumpht, or a Scipio trod

XX

Think ye it strikes too slow, the sword of fate, 115
Think ye the avenger loiters on his way,
That your own hands must open wide the gate,
And your own voice guide him to his prey,
Alas, it needs not, is it hard to know
Fate's threat'nings are not vain, the spoiler comes not slow 120

c 'They (the Senate) were unable to guard against the secret conspiracy of their slaves and domestics' 'At the hour of midnight the Salarian gate was silently opened and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet'—*Gibbon*

ALARIC AT ROME

XXI

And were there none, to stand and weep alone,
 And as the pageant swept before their eyes
 To hear a dim and long forgotten tone
 Tell of old times, and holiest memories,
 Till fanciful regret and dreamy woe 125
 Peopled night's voiceless shades with forms of long Ago

XXII

Oh yes! if fancy feels, beyond to day,
 Thoughts of the past and of the future time,
 How should that mightiest city pass away
 And not bethink her of her glorious prime, 130
 Whilst every chord that thrills at thoughts of home
 Jarr'd with the bursting shout, 'they come, the Goth, they come'!

XXIII

^dThe trumpet swells yet louder they are here!
 Yea, on your fathers bones the avengers tread,
 Not thus the time to weep upon the bier 135
 That holds the ashes of your hero-dead,
 If wreaths may twine for you, or laurels wave,
 They shall not deck your life, but sanctify your grave

XXIV

Alas! no wreaths are here Despair may teach
 Cowards to conquer and the weak to die, 140
 Nor tongue of man, nor fear, nor shame can preach
 So stern a lesson as necessity,
 Yet here it speaks not Yea, though all around
 Unhallowed feet are trampling on this haunted ground,

XXV

Though every holiest feeling, every tie 145
 That binds the heart of man with mightiest power,
 All natural love, all human sympathy

^d 'Adest Alaricus, trepidam urbem obsidet, turbat, irrumpit'—*Orosius*
Lib vii. cap 37

ALARIC AT ROME

Be crusht, and outraged in this bitter hour,
Here is no echo to the sound of home,
No shame that suns should rise to light a conquer'd Rome. 150

XXVI

That troublous night is over on the brow
Of thy stern hill, thou mighty Capitol,
One form stands gazing silently below
The morning mists from tower and temple roll,
And lo! the eternal city, as they rise, 155
Bursts, in majestic beauty, on her conqueror's eyes.

XXVII

Yes, there he stood, upon that silent hill,
And there beneath his feet his conquest lay
Unlike that ocean-city,* gazing still
Smilingly forth upon her sunny bay, 160
But o'er her vanisht might and humbled pride
Mourning, as widowed Venice o'er her Adrian tide

XXVIII

Breathe there not spirits on the peopled air?²
Float there not voices on the murmuring wind?²
Oh! sound there not some strains of sadness there, 165
To touch with sorrow even a victor's mind,
And wrest one tear from joy! Oh! who shall pen
The thoughts that toucht thy breast, thou lonely conqueror, then?²

XXIX

Perchance his wandering heart was far away,
Lost in dim memories of his early home, 170
And his young dreams of conquest, how to-day
Beheld him master of Imperial Rome,
Crowning his wildest hopes perchance his eyes
As they looked sternly on, beheld new victories,

* Naples — 'Stabiasque, et in omnia natam
Parthenopen'—*Ovid Metam Lib xv vers 711-12.*

ALARIC AT ROME

XXX

New dreams of wide dominion, mightier, higher, 175
Come floating up from the abyss of years,
Perchance that solemn sight might quench the fire
Even of that ardent spirit, hopes and fears
Might well be mingling at that murmured sigh,
Whispering from all around, 'All earthly things must die' 180

XXXI

Perchance that wondrous city was to him
But as one voiceless blank, a place of graves,
And recollections indistinct and dim,
Whose sons were conquerors once, and now were slaves
It may be in that desolate sight his eye 185
Saw but another step to climb to victory!

XXXII

Alas! that fiery spirit little knew
The change of life, the nothingness of power,
How both were hastening, as they flowered and grew,
Nearer and nearer to their closing hour 190
How every birth of time's miraculous womb
Swept off the withered leaves that hide the naked tomb

XXXIII

^fOne little year, that restless soul shall rest,
That frame of vigour shall be crumbling clay,
And tranquilly, above that troubled breast, 195
The sunny waters^g hold their joyous way
And gently shall the murmuring ripples flow,
Nor wake the weary soul that slumbers on below

^f Alaric died after a sudden illness, while engaged in attempting the invasion of Sicily, A.D. 410, the very year of the third siege of Rome by his forces

^g For an account of the death and singular burial of the Gothic monarch, see Gibbon, vol. v p. 329-30. 'By the labour of a captive multitude the course

ALARIC AT ROME

XXXIV

Alas! far other thoughts might well be ours
And dash our holiest raptures while we gaze 200
Eneigies wasted, unimproved hours,
The saddening visions of departed days
And while they rise here might we stand alone,
And mingle with thy ruins somewhat of our own

XXXV

Beautiful city! If departed things 205
Ever again put earthly likeness on,
Here should a thousand forms on fancy's wings
Float up to tell of ages that are gone
Yea though hand touch thee not, nor eye should see,
Still should the spirit hold communion, Rome, with thee! 210

XXXVI

Oh! it is bitter, that each fairest dream
Should fleet before us but to melt away,
That wildest visions still should loveliest seem
And soonest fade in the broad glare of day
That while we feel the world is dull and low, 215
Gazing on thee, we wake to find it is not so

XXXVII

A little while, alas, a little while,
And the same world has tongue, and ear, and eye,
The careless glance, the cold unmeaning smile,
The thoughtless word, the lack of sympathy! 220
Who would not turn him from the barren sea
And rest his weary eyes on the green land and thee!

of the Burentinus was forcibly diverted, a small river that washes the walls of Consentia The royal sepulchre, adorned with the splendid trophies of Rome was constructed in the vacant bed, and the waters were then restored to their natural channel, and the secret spot where the remains of Alaric had been deposited was for ever concealed by the inhuman massacre of the prisoners who had been employed to execute the work.

ALARIC AT ROME

XXXVIII

So pass we on But oh! to harp aright
The vanisht glories of thine early day,
There needs a minstrel of diviner might, 225
A holier incense than this feeble lay,
To chant thy requiem with more passionate breath,
And twine with bolder hand thy last memorial wreath!

The End

CROMWELL

[A prize poem scheduled for recitation in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, June 28, 1843 First published by J Vincent, Oxford, 1843 Reprinted in ADDITIONS TO PRIZE POEMS, Oxford, 1846, and by T and G Shrimpton, Oxford, 1863]

SYNOPSIS

INTRODUCTION—The mountains and the sea the cradles of freedom—contrasted with the birth-place of Cromwell—His childhood and youth—The germs of his future character probably formed during his life of inaction—Cromwell at the moment of his intended embarkation—Retrospect of his past life and profligate youth—Temptations held out by the prospect of a life of rest in America—How far such rest was allowable—Vision of his future life—Different persons represented in it—Charles the First—Cromwell himself—His victories and maritime glory—Pym—Strafford—Laud—Hampden—Falkland—Milton—Charles the First—Cromwell on his death-bed—His character—Dispersion of the Vision—Conclusion

CROMWELL

Schrecklich ist es, deiner Wahrheit
Sterbliches Gefäss zu seyn

SCHILLER

High fate is their's, ye sleepless waves, whose ear
Learns Freedom's lesson from your voice of fear,
Whose spell-bound sense from childhood's hour hath known

CROMWELL

Familiar meanings in your mystic tone
 Sounds of deep import—voices that beguile 5
 Age of its tears and childhood of its smile,
 To yearn with speechless impulse to the free
 And gladsome greetings of the buoyant sea!
^aHigh fate is their's, who where the silent sky
 Stoops to the soaring mountains, live and die, 10
 Who scale the cloud-capt height, or sink to rest
 In the deep stillness of its shelt'ring breast,—
 Around whose feet the exulting waves have sung,
 The eternal hills their giant shadows flung

No wonders nurs'd thy childhood, not for thee 15
 Did the waves chaunt their song of liberty!
 Thine was no mountain home, where Freedom's form
 Abides enthron'd amid the mist and storm,
 And whispers to the listening winds, that swell
 With solemn cadence round her citadel! 20
 These had no sound for thee that cold calm eye
 Lit with no rapture as the storm swept by,
 To mark with shiver'd crest the reeling wave
 Hide his torn head beneath his sunless cave,
 Or hear 'mid circling crags, the impatient cry 25
 Of the pent winds, that scream in agony!
 Yet all high sounds that mountain children hear
 Flash'd from thy soul upon thine inward ear,
 All Freedom's mystic language—storms that roar
 By hill or wave, the mountain or the shore,— 30
 All these had stirr'd thy spirit, and thine eye
 In common sights read secret sympathy,
 Till all bright thoughts that hills or waves can yield,
 Deck'd the dull waste, and the familiar field,
 Or wondrous sounds from tranquil skies were borne 35

^a This is in allusion to the idea expressed in the twelfth of Mr Wordsworth's Sonnets to Liberty —

'Two voices are there one is of the sea,' &c.
 contrasting it with the fact of Cromwell's birth-place having been the fen country of Huntingdonshire, where he lived till he was forty years old

CROMWELL

Far o'er the glistening sheets of windy corn
 Skies—that, unbound by clasp of mountain chain,
 Slope stately down, and melt into the plain,
 Sounds—such as erst the lone wayfaring man
^bCaught, as he journeyed, from the lips of Pan, 40
^cOr that mysterious cry, that smote with fear,
 Like sounds from other worlds, the Spartan's ear,
 While, o'er the dusty plain, the murmurous throng
 Of Heaven's embattled myriads swept along

Say not such dreams are idle for the man 45
 Still toils to perfect what the child began,
 And thoughts, that were but outlines, time engraves
 Deep on his life, and childhood's baby waves,
 Made rough with care, become the changeful sea,
 Stem'd by the strength of manhood fearlessly, 50
 And fleeting thoughts, that on the lonely wild
 Swept o'er the fancy of that heedless child,
 Perchance had quicken'd with a living truth
 The cold dull soil of his unfruitful youth,
 Till, with his daily life, a life, that threw 55
 Its shadows o'er the future, flower'd and grew,
 With common cares unmingling, and apart,
 Haunting the shrouded chambers of his heart,
 Till life, unstirr'd by action, life became
 Threaded and lighten'd by a track of flame, 60
 An inward light, that, with its streaming ray,
 On the dark current of his changeless day
 Bound all his being with a silver chain—
 Like a swift river thro' a silent plain!

High thoughts were his, when by the gleaming flood, 65
 With heart new strung, and stern resolve, he stood,
 Where rode the tall dark ships, whose loosens'd sail
 All idly flutter'd in the eastern gale,^d

^b *Herod* vi 106

^c The vision of Demaratus on the plain of Eleusis — *Herod* viii 65

^d Eight ships, lying in the Thames, and ready to sail, were detained by order of Council. — *Hume*, vi 309

CROMWELL

High thoughts were his,—but Memory's glance the while
 Fell on the cherish'd past with tearful smile, 70
 And peaceful joys and gentler thoughts swept by,
 Like summer lightnings o'er a darken'd sky
 The peace of childhood, and the thoughts that roam,
 Like loving shadows, round that childhood's home,
 Joys that had come and vanish'd, half unknown, 75
 Then slowly brighten'd, as the days had flown,
 Years that were sweet or sad, becalm'd or toss'd
 On life's wild waves—the living and the lost
 Youth stain'd with follies and the thoughts of ill
 Crush'd, as they rose, by manhood's sterner will 80
 Repentant prayers, that had been strong to save—
 And the first sorrow, which is childhood's grave!
 All shapes that haunt remembrance, soft and fair,
 Like a green land at sunset, all were there!
 Eyes that he knew, old faces, unforget, 85
 Gaz'd sadly down on his unrestful lot,
 And Memory's calm clear voice, and mournful eye,
 Chill'd every buoyant hope that floated by,
 Like frozen winds on southern vales that blow
 From a far land—the children of the snow— 90
 O'er flowering plain and blossom'd meadow fling
 The cold dull shadow of their icy wing

Then Fancy's roving visions, bold and free,
 A moment dispossess'd reality
 All airy hopes that idle hearts can frame, 95
 Like dreams between two sorrows, went and came
 Fond hearts that fain would clothe the unwelcome truth
 Of toilsome manhood in the dreams of youth,
 To bend in rapture at some idol throne,
 Some lifeless soulless phantom of their own, 100
 Some shadowy vision of a tranquil life,
 Of joys unclouded, years unstirr'd by strife,
 Of sleep unshadow'd by a dream of woe,
 Of many a lawny hill, and streams with silver flow,

CROMWELL

Of giant mountains by the western main, 105
 The sunless forest, and the sealike plain,
 Those lingering hopes of coward hearts, that still
 Would play the traitor to the stedfast will,
 One moment's space, perchance, might charm his eye
 From the stern future, and the years gone by 110
 One moment's space might waft him far away
 To western shores—the death-place of the day!
 Might paint the calm, sweet peace—the rest of home,
 Far o'er the pathless waste of labouring foam—
 Peace, that recall'd his childish hours anew, 115
 More calm, more deep, than childhood ever knew!
 Green happy places—like a flowery lea
 Between the barren mountains and the stormy sea

O pleasant rest, if once the race were run!
 O happy slumber, if the day were done! 120
 Dreams that were sweet at eve, at morn were sin,
 With cares to conquer, and a goal to win!
 His were no tranquil years—no languid sleep—
 No life of dreams—no home beyond the deep—
 No softening ray—no visions false and wild— 125
 No glittering hopes on life's grey distance smiled—
 Like isles of sunlight on a mountain's brow,
 Lit by a wandering gleam, we know not how,
 Far on the dim horizon, when the sky
 With glooming clouds broods dark and heavily 130

Then his eye slumber'd, and the chain was broke
 That bound his spirit, and his heart awoke,
 Then—like a kingly river—swift and strong
 The future roll'd its gathering tides along!
 The shout of onset and the shriek of fear 135
 Smote, like the rush of waters, on his ear,
 And his eye kindled with the kindling fray,
 The surging battle and the mail'd array!
 All wondrous deeds the coming days should see,
 And the long Vision of the years to be 140

CROMWELL

Pale phantom hosts, like shadows, faint and far,
 Councils, and armies, and the pomp of war!
 And one sway'd all, who wore a kingly crown,
 Until another rose and smote him down
 A form that tower'd above his brother men, 145
 A form he knew—but it was shrouded then!
 With stern, slow steps—unseen—yet still the same,
 By leaguer'd tower and tented field it came,
 By Naseby's hill, o'er Marston's heathy waste,
 By Worcester's field, the warrior-vision pass'd! 150
 From their deep base, thy beetling cliffs, Dunbar,
 Rang, as he trode them, with the voice of war!
 The soldier kindled at his words of fire,
 The statesman quail'd before his glance of ire!
 Worn was his brow with cares no thought could scan, 155
 His step was loftier than the steps of man,
 *And the winds told his glory—and the wave
 Sonorous witness to his empire gave!

What forms are these, that with complaining sound,
 And slow reluctant steps are gathering round? 160
 Forms that with him shall tread life's changing stage,
 Cross his lone path, or share his pilgrimage
 There, as he gazed, a wond'rous band—they came,
 Pym's look of hate, and Strafford's glance of flame
 There Laud, with noiseless steps and glittering eye, 165
 In priestly garb, a frail old man, went by,
 His drooping head bowed meekly on his breast,
 His hands were folded, like a saint at rest!
 †There Hampden bent him o'er his saddle bow,
 And death's cold dews bedimm'd his earnest brow, 170
 Still turn'd to watch the battle—still forgot

* 'It is just to say, that the maritime glory of England may first be traced from the era of the commonwealth in a track of continuous light.'—*Hallam's Const Hist* 11

† 'His head bending down, and his hands resting on his horse's neck, he was seen riding from the field'—*Lord Nugent's Memorials of Hampden*, 11. 435.

CROMWELL

Himself, his sufferings, in his country's lot!
 "There Falkland ey'd the strife that would not cease,
 Shook back his tangled locks, and murmur'd—'Peace'
 With feet that spurn'd the ground, lo! Milton there 175
 Stood like a statue, and his face was fair—
 Fair beyond human beauty, and his eye,
 That knew not earth, soar'd upwards to the sky!
 "He, too, was there—it was the princely boy,
 The child-companion of his childish joy! 180
 But oh! how chang'd—those deathlike features wore
 Childhood's bright glance and sunny smile no more!
 That brow so sad, so pale, so full of care—
 What trace of careless childhood linger'd there?
 What spring of youth in that majestic mien, 185
 So sadly calm, so kingly, so serene?
 No—all was chang'd—the monarch wept alone,
 Between a ruin'd church and shatter'd throne!
 Friendless and hopeless—like a lonely tree,
 On some bare headland, straining mournfully, 190
 That all night long its weary moan doth make
 To the vex'd waters of a mountain lake!
 Still, as he gaz'd, the phantom's mournful glance
 Shook the deep slumber of his deathlike trance,
 Like some forgotten strain that haunts us still, 195
 That calm eye follow'd, turn him where he will,
 Till the pale monarch, and the long array,
 Pass'd, like a morning mist, in tears away!

Then all his dream was troubled, and his soul
 Thrill'd with a dread no slumber could control, 200
 On that dark form his eyes had gaz'd before,
 Nor known it then,—but it was veil'd no more!
 "In broad clear light the ghastly vision shone,—

^g 'In his clothes and habit, which he had minded before always with more neatness and industry, he was now, not only incurious, but negligent.'—*Clarendon*

^h Alluding to the stories of Cromwell's childish intimacy with Charles the First.

CROMWELL

That form was his,—those features were his own!¹
 The night of terrors, and the day of care, 205
 The years of toil, all, all were written there!
 Sad faces watch'd around him, and his breath
 Came faint and feeble in the embrace of death
 'The gathering tempest, with its voice of fear,
 'His latest loftiest music, smote his ear!² 210
 'That day of boundless hope and promise high,
 That day that hail'd his triumphs, saw him die!³
 Then from those whitening lips, as death drew near,
 'The imprisoning chains fell off, and all was clear!⁴
 Like lowering clouds, that at the close of day, 215
 Bath'd in a blaze of sunset, melt away,
 And with its clear calm tones, that dying prayer
 Chcer'd all the failing hearts that sorrow'd there!

A Life—whose ways no human thought could scan,—
 A life—that was not as the life of man, 220
 A life—that wrote its purpose with a sword,
 Moulding itself in action, not in word!⁵
 Rent with tumultuous thoughts, whose conflict rung
 Deep thro' his soul, and chok'd his faltering tongue,
 A heart that reck'd not of the countless dead, 225
 That strew'd the blood-stain'd path where Empire led,
 A daring hand, that shrunk not to fulfil
 The thought that spurr'd it, and a dauntless will,
 Bold action's parent, and a piercing ken
 Thro' the dark chambers of the hearts of men, 230
 To read each thought, and teach that master mind

222 1863 into action [wrongly]

¹ Clarendon mentions a great storm which attended the death of Cromwell
^k 'He was a great lover of music, and he entertained the most skilful in that science in his pay and family'—*Perfect Politician*

¹ Cromwell died on his fortunate day, the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester,—September 3rd *

^m There is a remarkable contrast between the perfect clearness of the celebrated prayer Cromwell is recorded to have uttered on his death bed, and the confusedness of the speeches which are attributed to him

CROMWELL

The fears and hopes and passions of mankind,
All these were thine—Oh thought of fear!—and thou
Stretch'd on that bed of death, art nothing now

Then all his vision faded, and his soul 235
Sprang from its sleep! and lo, the waters roll
Once more beneath him, and the fluttering sail,
Where the dark ships rode proudly, woo'd the gale,
And the wind murmur'd round him, and he stood
Once more alone beside the gleaming flood 240

THE HAYSWATER BOAT

[*Published 1849*]

A REGION desolate and wild
Black, chafing water and afloat,
And lonely as a truant child
In a waste wood, a single boat
No mast, no sails are set thereon, 5
It moves, but never moveth on
And welters like a human thing
Amid the wild waves weltering

Behind, a buried vale doth sleep,
Far down the torrent cleaves its way 10
In front the dumb rock rises steep,
A fretted wall of blue and grey,
Of shooting cliff and crumbled stone
With many a wild weed overgrown
All else, black water and afloat, 15
One rood from shore, that single boat

Last night the wind was up and strong,
The grey-streak'd waters labour still
The strong blast brought a pigmy throng
From that mild hollow in the hill, 20

THE HAYSWATER BOAT

From those twin brooks, that beached strand
So featly strewn with drifted sand,
From those weird domes of mounded green
That spot the solitary scene

This boat they found against the shore 25
The glossy rushes nodded by
One rood from land they push'd, no more,
Then rested, listening silently.
The loud rains lash'd the mountain's crown,
The grating shingle straggled down 30
All night they sate, then stole away,
And left it rocking in the bay

Last night?—I look'd, the sky was clear,
The boat was old, a batter'd boat
In sooth, it seems a hundred year 35
Since that strange crew did ride afloat
The boat hath drifted in the bay—
The oars have moulder'd as they lay—
The rudder swings—yet none doth steer
What living hand hath brought it here? 40

SONNET TO THE HUNGARIAN NATION

[Published in THE EXAMINER, July 21, 1849]

Not in sunk Spain's prolong'd death agony,
Not in rich England, bent but to make pour
The flood of the world's commerce on her shore,
Not in that madhouse, France, from whence the cry 5
Afflicts grave Heaven with its long senseless roar,
Not in American vulgarity,
Nor wordy German imbecility—
Lies any hope of heroism more
Hungarians! Save the world! Renew the stories
Of men who against hope repell'd the chain, 10

SONNET TO THE HUNGARIAN NATION

And make the world's dead spirit leap again!
On land renew that Greek exploit, whose glories
Hallow the Salaminian promontories,
And the Armada flung to the fierce main

DESTINY

[*Published 1852*]

WHY each is striving, from of old,
To love more deeply than he can²
Still would be true, yet still grows cold²
—Ask of the Powers that sport with man!

They yok'd in him, for endless strife, 5
A heart of ice, a soul of fire,
And hurl'd him on the Field of Life,
An aimless unallay'd Desire

COURAGE

[*Published 1852*]

TRUE, we must tame our rebel will
True, we must bow to Nature's law
Must bear in silence many an ill,
Must learn to wait, renounce, withdraw
Yet now, when boldest wills give place, 5
When Fate and Circumstance are strong,
And in their rush the human race
Are swept, like huddling sheep, along,
Those sterner spirits let me prize,
Who, though the tendency of the whole 10
They less than us might recognize,
Kept, more than us, their strength of soul
Yes, be the second Cato prais'd!
Not that he took the course to die—
But that, when 'gainst himself he rais'd 15
His arm, he rais'd it dauntlessly

COURAGE

And, Byron! let us dare admire
If not thy fierce and turbid song,
Yet that, in anguish, doubt, desire,
Thy fiery courage still was strong 20

The sun that on thy tossing pain
Did with such cold derision shine,
He crush'd thee not with his disdain—
He had his glow, and thou hadst thine,

Our fane, disguise it as we may,
Is weakness, is a faltering course 25
Oh that past times could give our day,
Join'd to its clearness, of their force!

THEKLA'S ANSWER

[*Published 1853*]

(*From Schiller*)

WHERE I am, thou ask'st, and where I wended
When my fleeting shadow pass'd from thee?—
Am I not concluded now, and ended?
Have not life and love been granted me?

Ask, where now those nightingales are singing, 5
Who, of late, on the soft nights of May,
Set thine ears with soul-fraught music ringing—
Only, while their love liv'd, lasted they

Find I him, from whom I had to sever?—
Doubt it not, we met, and we are one 10
There, where what is join'd, is join'd for ever,
There, where tears are never more to run

There thou too shalt live with us together,
When thou too hast borne the love we bore
There, from sin deliver'd, dwells my Father, 15
Track'd by Murder's bloody sword no more.

THEKLA'S ANSWER

There he feels, it was no dream deceiving
Lur'd him starwards to uplift his eye
God doth match his gifts to man's believing,
Believe, and thou shalt find the Holy nigh 20

All thou augurest here of lovely seeming
There shall find fulfilment in its day
Dare, O Friend, be wandering, dare be dreaming,
Lofty thought lies oft in childish play

'BELOW THE SURFACE-STREAM'

[*These lines first appeared in the second instalment of 'St Paul and Protestantism', the CORNHILL MAGAZINE, November 1869*]

BELOW the surface-stream, shallow and light,
Of what we *say* we feel—below the stream,
As light, of what we *think* we feel—there flows
With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep,
The central stream of what we feel indeed

ROME-SICKNESS

[*Published in IN MEMORIAM A WREATH OF STRAY LEAVES TO THE MEMORY OF
EMILY BLISS GOULD, Rome, 1875*]

To daily tasks we set our hand,
And oft the spirit, pent at home,
Breaks out and longs for Switzerland,
Longs oftener yet and pines for Rome

I pass'd to-day o'er Walton Heath— 5
The coming spring-time's earliest stir
Quickened and moved, a happy breath,
In moss, and gorse, and shining fir

Fortunate firs! who never think 10
How firs less curst by Fortune's frown
O'er Glion fringe the mountain's brink,
Or dot the slopes to Vevey down

ROME-SICKNESS

I cross'd St George's Hill to-day—
There in the leaf-strewn copse I found
The tender foxglove-plants display 15
Their first green muffle on the ground

They envy not, this tranquil brood,
The cyclamens whose blossoms fill
With fragrance all Frascati's wood
Along the gracious Alban Hill! 20

Man only, with eternal bent
To come and go, to shift and range,
At life and living not content,
Chafes in his place, and pines for change

Yet happy,—since his feverish blood 25
Leaves him no rest, and change he will,—
When restlessness is restless good,
Still mending, lessening, human ill!

Unwearied, as from land to land
The incessant wanderer takes his way, 30
To hold the light and reach the hand
To all who sink, to all who stray!

SS 'LUSITANIA'

[*Published in THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, January, 1879*]

I READ in Dante how that horned light,
Which hid Ulysses, waved itself and said
'Following the sun, we set our vessel's head
To the great main, pass'd Seville on the right

'And Ceuta on the left, then southward sped. 5
At last in air, far off, dim rose a Height
We cheer'd, but from it rush'd a blast of might,
And struck—and o'er us the sea-waters spread'

SS 'LUSITANIA'

I dropp'd the book, and of my child I thought
In his long black ship speeding night and day 10
O'er those same seas, dark Teneriffe rose, fraught

With omen, 'Oh! were that Mount pass'd', I say
Then the door opens and this card is brought
'Reach'd Cape Verde Islands, "Lusitania".'

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

NOTE 1, PAGE 2

Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen

The name Europe (*Εὐρώπη, the wide prospect*) probably describes the appearance of the European coast to the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor opposite The name Asia, again, comes, it has been thought, from the muddy fens of the rivers of Asia Minor, such as the Cayster or Mæander, which struck the imagination of the Greeks living near them

[In 1849, '53, '54, and '57 Arnold is content with the simple note *Εὐρώπη*
1 4 fens of the marshy rivers (1869) *becomes* muddy fens of the
rivers (1877)]

NOTE 2, PAGE 8

Mycerinus

'After Cephren, Mycerinus, son of Cheops, reigned over Egypt He abhorred his father's courses, and judged his subjects more justly than any of their kings had done — To him there came an oracle from the city of Buto, to the effect that he was to live but six years longer, and to die in the seventh year from that time '—HERODOTUS

[Note first inserted in 1853 The 1849 edition merely gives the reference
'Herodotus, II 133' in a footnote]

NOTE 3, PAGE 38

Stagirus

Stagirus was a young monk to whom St. Chrysostom addressed three books, and of whom those books give an account They will be found in the first volume of the Benedictine edition of St Chrysostom's works

[Note first published in 1877]

NOTE 4, PAGE 47

Horatian Echo

Written in 1847 Printed by permission of Mr Arthur Galton, to whom the Poem was given in 1886 for publication in *The Hobby Horse*
[Publisher's note in edition of 1890]

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

NOTE 5, PAGE 53

Those who have been long familiar with the English Lake-Country will find no difficulty in recalling, from the description in the text, the roadside inn at Wythburn on the descent from Dunmail Raise towards Keswick, its sedentary landlord of thirty years ago, and the passage over the Wythburn Fells to Watendlath

[Note first published in 1869

1 2 have (1869) *becomes* find (1877)

1 4 twenty (1869) *becomes* thirty (1877)]

NOTE 6, PAGE 61

Sohrab and Rustum

The story of Sohrab and Rustum is told in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, as follows —

“The young Sohrab was the fruit of one of Rustum's early amours. He had left his mother, and sought fame under the banners of Afrasiab, whose armies he commanded, and soon obtained a renown beyond that of all contemporary heroes but his father. He had carried death and dismay into the ranks of the Persians, and had terrified the boldest warriors of that country, before Rustum encountered him, which at last that hero resolved to do, under a feigned name. They met three times. The first time they parted by mutual consent, though Sohrab had the advantage, the second, the youth obtained a victory, but granted life to his unknown father, the third was fatal to Sohrab, who, when writhing in the pangs of death, warned his conqueror to shun the vengeance that is inspired by parental woes, and bade him dread the rage of the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain his son Sohrab. These words, we are told, were as death to the aged hero, and when he recovered from a trance, he called in despair for proofs of what Sohrab had said. The afflicted and dying youth tore open his mail, and showed his father a seal which his mother had placed on his arm when she discovered to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. The sight of his own signet rendered Rustum quite frantic, he cursed himself, attempting to put an end to his existence, and was only prevented by the efforts of his expiring son. After Sohrab's death, he burnt his tents and all his goods, and carried the corpse to Seistan, where it was interred, the army of Turan was, agreeably to the last request of Sohrab, permitted to cross the Oxus unmolested. To reconcile us to the improbability of this tale, we are

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

informed that Rustum could have no idea his son was in existence. The mother of Sohrab had written to him her child was a daughter, fearing to lose her darling infant if she revealed the truth, and Rustum, as before stated, fought under a feigned name, an usage not uncommon in the chivalrous combats of those days.

[Note first published in 1854, omitted in 1857, and restored in 1869.]

In 1854, seven lines from the end, this additional sentence: 'It was commanded by Haman and Zoarrah attended, on the part of Rustum, to see that this engagement was respected by the Persians.'

In 1854 only, the quotation from Malcolm was followed by this further note:

M. Sainte-Beuve, also, that most delightful of critics, in a notice of an edition of Ferdousi's great poem by M. Mohl now in course of publication at Paris, containing the original text and a prose translation, gives an analysis of this episode, with extracts from M. Mohl's translation, which I will quote at length commencing from the point where Rustum leaves Tehmineh, the future mother of Sohrab, before the birth of her child, having given her an onyx with instructions to let the child wear it in her hair, if a girl, and on his arm, if a boy. Of M. Mohl's book itself I have not been able to obtain sight.

'Là-dessus Roustem part au matin, monte sur son cheval Raksch, il s'en retourne vers l'Iran, et, durant des années, il n'a plus que de vagues nouvelles de la belle Tehmineh et du fils qui lui est né, car c'est un fils et non une fille. Ce fils est beau et au visage brillant, on l'appelle Sohrab. "Quand il eut un mois, il était comme un enfant d'un an, quand il eut trois ans, il s'exerçait au jeu des armes, et à cinq ans il avait le cœur d'un lion. Quand il eut atteint l'âge de dix ans, personne dans son pays n'osait lutter contre lui." Il se distinguait, à première vue, de tous les Turcs d'alentour, il devenait manifeste qu'il était issu d'une autre race. L'enfant, sentant sa force, alla fièrement demander à sa mère le nom de son père, et, quand il le sut, il n'eut plus de cesse qu'il n'eût assemblée une armée pour aller combattre les Iraniens et se faire reconnaître du glorieux Roustem à ses exploits et à sa bravoure.

'Sohrab choisit un cheval assez fort pour le porter, un cheval fort comme un éléphant, il assemble une armée et se met en marche, non pour combattre son père, mais pour combattre et détrôner le souverain dont Roustem est le feudataire, et afin de mettre la race vaillante de Roustem à la place de ce roi déjà fainéant. C'est ici que l'action commence à se nouer avec un art et une habileté qui appartiennent au poète. La solution fatale est à la fois entrevue et retardée moyennant des

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

gradations qui vont la rendre plus dramatique Roustem, mandé en toute hâte par le roi effrayé, ne s'empresse point d'accourir A cette nouvelle d'une armée de Turcs commandée par un jeune homme si vaillant et si héroïque, il a l'idée d'abord que ce pourrait bien être son fils, mais non ce rejeton de sa race est trop enfant, se dit-il, "et ses lèvres sentent encore le lait" Roustem arrive pourtant, mais, mal accueilli par le roi, il entre dans une colère d'Achille, et il est tout prêt à s'en retourner dans sa tente On ne le flechit qu'en lui représentant que s'abstenir en une telle rencontre, ce serait paraître reculer devant le jeune héros Cependant les armées sont en présence Roustem, déguisé en Turc, s'introduit dans un château qu'occupe l'ennemi, pour juger de tout par lui-même Il voit son fils assis à un festin il l'admire, il le compare, pour la force et la beauté, à sa propre race, on dirait, à un moment, que le sang au-dedans va pailler et lui crier *C'est lui!* Le jeune Sohrab, de son côté, quand vient le matin, en présence de cette armée dont le camp se déploie devant lui, est avide de savoir si son noble père n'en est pas Monte sur un lieu élevé, il se fait nommer par un prisonnier tous les chefs illustres dont il voit se dérouler les étendards Le prisonnier les énumère avec complaisance et les lui nomme tous, tous excepté un seul, excepté celui, précisément, qui l'intéresse Le prisonnier fait semblant de croire que Roustem n'est pas venu, car il craint que ce jeune orgueilleux, dans sa force indomptable, ne veuille se signaler en s'attaquant de préférence à ce chef illustre, et qu'il ne cause un grand malheur Sohrab insiste et trouve étonnant qu'entre tant de chefs, le vaillant Roustem, le premier de tous, ait manqué cette fois à l'appel, il presse de questions le prisonnier, qui lutte de ruse, et qui s'obstine, sur ce point, à lui cacher la vérité, "Sans doute, réplique celui-ci, le héros sera allé dans le Zaboulistan, car c'est le temps des fêtes dans les jardins de roses " A quoi Sohrab, sentant bouillonner son sang, répond "Ne parle pas ainsi, car le front de Roustem se tourne toujours vers le combat " Mais Sohrab a beau vouloir forcer le secret, la fatalité l'emporte "Comment veux-tu gouverner ce monde que gouverne Dieu?" s'écrie le poète "C'est le Créateur qui a déterminé d'avance toutes choses Le sort a écrit autrement que tu n'aurais voulu, et, comme il te mène, il faut que tu suives "

'Sohrab engage le combat, tout plie devant lui Jamais nos vieux romans de chevalerie n'ont retenti de pareils coups d'épée Les plus vaillants chefs reculent Roustem est appelé, il arrive, il se trouve seul en présence de sons fils, et le duel va s'entamer La pitié, tout à coup, saisit le vieux chef, en voyant ce jeune guerrier si fier, et si beau

"O jeune homme si tendre!" lui dit-il, "la terre est sèche et froide,

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

l'air est doux et chaud Je suis vieux, j'ai vu maint champ de bataille, j'ai détruit mainte armée, et je n'ai jamais été battu Mais j'ai pitié de toi et ne voudrais pas t'arracher la vie Ne reste pas avec les Turcs, je ne connais personne dans l'Iran qui ait des épaules et des bras comme toi "

'En entendant ces paroles qui semblent sortir d'une âme amie, le cœur de Sohrab s'élance, il a un pressentiment soudain, il demande ingénument au guerrier s'il n'est pas celui qu'il cherche, s'il n'est pas l'illustre Roustem Mais le vieux chef, qui ne veut pas donner à ce jeune homme trop d'orgueil, répond avec ruse qu'il n'est pas Roustem, et le cœur de Sohrab se resserre aussitôt, le nuage qui venait de s'entr'ouvrir se referme, et la destinée se poursuit

'Le duel commence il n'est pas sans vicissitudes et sans péripéties singulières, il dure deux jours Des le premier choc, les épées des combattants se brisent en éclats sous leurs coups "Quels coups! on eût dit qu'ils amenaient la Résurrection!" Le combat continue à coups de massue, nous sommes en plein âge héroïque Le premier jour, le duel n'a pas de résultat Après une lutte acharnée, les deux chefs s'éloignent, se donnant rendez-vous pour le lendemain Roustem s'étonne d'avoir rencontré pour la première fois son égal, presque son maître, et de sentir son cœur défaillir sans savoir pourquoi Le second jour, au moment de reprendre la lutte, Sohrab a un mouvement de tendresse, et la nature, près de succomber, fait en lui comme un suprême effort En abordant le vieux chef, il s'adresse à lui le sourire sur les lèvres et comme s'ils avaient passé la nuit amicalement ensemble

"Comment as-tu dormi?" lui demande-t-il, "comment t'es-tu levé ce matin? Pourquoi as-tu préparé ton cœur pour la lutte? Jette cette massue et cette épée de la vengeance, jette tout cet appareil d'un combat impie Asseyons-nous tous deux à terre, et adoucissons avec du vin nos regards courroucés Faisons un traité en invoquant Dieu, et repentons-nous dans notre cœur de cette inimitié Attends qu'un autre se présente pour le combat, et apprête avec moi une fête Mon cœur te communiquera son amour, et je ferai couler de tes yeux des larmes de honte Puisque tu es né d'une noble race, fais-moi connaître ton origine, ne me cache pas ton nom, puisque tu vas me combattre ne serais-tu pas Roustem?"

'Roustem, par sentiment d'orgueil, et soupçonnant toujours une feinte de la part d'un jeune homme avide de gloire, dissimule une dernière fois, et, dès ce moment, le sort n'a plus de trêve Toutes les ruses de Roustem (et j'en supprime encore) tournent contre lui, il finit par plonger un poignard dans la poitrine de son fils, et ne le reconnaît

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

que dans l'instant supreme Le jeune homme meurt avec résignation, avec douceur, en pensant a sa mere, a ses amis, en recommandant qu'on épargne après lui cette armee qu'il a engagée dans une entreprise téméraire

‘ “Pendant bien des jours, je leur ai donne de belles paroles, je leur ai donné l'espoir de tout obtenir, car comment pouvais-je savoir, ô heros illustre, que je perirais de la main de mon pere ? Je voyais les signes que ma mere m'avait indiqués, mais je n'en croyais pas mes yeux. Mon sort etait écrit au-dessus de ma tête, et je devais mourir de la main de mon pere. Je suis venu comme la foudre, je m'en vais comme le vent, peut-être que je le retrouverai heureux dans le ciel ! ”

‘ Ainsi parle en expirant cet autre Hippolyte, immolé ici de la main de Thésée ’

A writer in the *Christian Remembrancer* (of the general tenour of whose remarks I have, assuredly, no right to complain) having made the discovery of this notice by M. Sainte-Beuve, has pointed out the passages in which I have made use of the extracts from M. Mohl's translation which it contains, has observed, apparently with blame, that I 'have not thought fit to offer a single syllable of acknowledgment to an author to whom I have been manifestly very largely indebted', has complained of being 'under some embarrassment from not being sure how much of the treatment is Mr. Arnold's own', and, finally, has suggested that 'the whole work of M. Mohl may have been used throughout, and the study of antiquity carried so far as simply to reproduce an ancient poem as well as an ancient subject'.

It would have been more charitable, perhaps, had the reviewer, before making this goodnatured suggestion, ascertained, by reference to M. Mohl's work, how far it was confirmed by the fact.

The reader, however, is now in possession of the whole of the sources from which I have drawn the story of *Sohrab and Rustum*, and can determine, if he pleases, the exact amount of my obligation to M. Mohl. But I hope that it will not in future be supposed, if I am silent as to the sources from which a poem has been derived, that I am trying to conceal obligations, or to claim an absolute originality for all parts of it. When any man endeavours to '*remanier et reinventer a sa manière*' a great story, which, as M. Sainte-Beuve says of that of *Sohrab and Rustum*, has '*couru le monde*', it may be considered quite certain that he has not drawn all the details of his work out of his own head. The reader is not, I think, concerned to ask, from what sources these have been drawn, but only how the whole work, as it stands, affects him. Real plagiarism, such as the borrowing without acknowledgment of passages

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

from other English poets—real dishonesty, such as the endeavouring to pass off the mere translation of a poem as an original work—are always certain enough to be discovered

I must not be led on, from defending the morality of my imitation, to defend at length its aesthetics, but I cannot forbear adding, that it would be a most unfortunate scruple which should restrain an author, treating matter of history or tradition, from placing, where he can, in the mouths of his personages the very words of the old chronicle, or romance, or poem (when the poem embodies, as that of Ferdoussi, the tradition of a people), and which should lead him to substitute for these any '*eigene* [sic] *grossen Erfindungen*' For my part, I only regret that I could not meet with a translation from Ferdoussi's poem of the whole of the episode of *Sohrab and Rustum* with a prose translation, that is for in a verse translation no original work is any longer recognizable I should certainly have made all the use I could of it The use of the tradition, above everything else, gives to a work that *naïveté*, that flavour of reality and truth, which is the very life of poetry

NOTE 7, PAGE 95

Balder Dead

'Balder the Good having been tormented with terrible dreams, indicating that his life was in great peril, communicated them to the assembled Æsir, who resolved to conjure all things to avert from him the threatened danger Then Frigga exacted an oath from fire and water, from iron, and all other metals, as well as from stones, earths, diseases, beasts, birds, poisons, and creeping things, that none of them would do any harm to Balder When this was done, it became a favourite pastime of the Æsir, at their meetings, to get Balder to stand up and serve them as a mark, some hurling darts at him, some stones, while others hewed at him with their swords and battle-axes, for do what they would, none of them could harm him, and this was regarded by all as a great honour shown to Balder But when Loki beheld the scene he was sorely vexed that Balder was not hurt Assuming, therefore, the shape of a woman, he went to Fensalir, the mansion of Frigga That goddess, when she saw the pretended woman, inquired of her if she knew what the Æsir were doing at their meetings She replied, that they were throwing darts and stones at Balder without being able to hurt him

"Ay," said Frigga, "neither metal nor wood can hurt Balder, for I have exacted an oath from all of them"

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

“What!” exclaimed the woman, “have all things sworn to spare Balder?”

“All things,” replied Frigga, “except one little shrub that grows on the eastern side of Valhalla, and is called Mistletoe, and which I thought too young and feeble to crave an oath from”

‘As soon as Loki heard this he went away, and, resuming his natural shape, cut off the mistletoe, and repaired to the place where the gods were assembled. There he found Hödur standing apart, without partaking of the sports, on account of his blindness, and going up to him said, “Why dost thou not also throw something at Balder?”’

“Because I am blind,” answered Hodur, “and see not where Balder is, and have, moreover, nothing to throw with”

“Come, then,” said Loki, “do like the rest, and show honour to Balder by throwing this twig at him, and I will direct thy arm toward the place where he stands”

‘Hodur then took the mistletoe, and, under the guidance of Loki, darted it at Balder, who, pierced through and through, fell down lifeless’—*Edda*

[Note first published in 1869]

NOTE 8, PAGE 130

Tristram and Iseult

‘In the court of his uncle King Marc, the king of Cornwall, who at this time resided at the castle of Tyntagel, Tristram became expert in all knightly exercises —The king of Ireland, at Tristram’s solicitations, promised to bestow his daughter Iseult in marriage on King Marc. The mother of Iseult gave to her daughter’s confidante a philtre, or love-potion, to be administered on the night of her nuptials. Of this beverage Tristram and Iseult, on their voyage to Cornwall, unfortunately partook. Its influence, during the remainder of their lives, regulated the affections and destiny of the lovers —

‘After the arrival of Tristram and Iseult in Cornwall, and the nuptials of the latter with King Marc, a great part of the romance is occupied with their contrivances to procure secret interviews —Tristram, being forced to leave Cornwall, on account of the displeasure of his uncle, repaired to Brittany, where lived Iseult with the White Hands —He married her—more out of gratitude than love —Afterwards he proceeded to the dominions of Arthur, which became the theatre of unnumbered exploits

‘Tristram, subsequent to these events, returned to Brittany, and to his

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

long-neglected wife There, being wounded and sick, he was soon reduced to the lowest ebb In this situation, he despatched a confidant to the queen of Cornwall, to try if he could induce her to follow him to Brittany, etc.—DUNLOP's *History of Fiction*

[Note first published in 1853 The passage is a brief abstract of Dunlop, composed of select sentences

In all editions through 1881, 'follow' in last line reads 'accompany']

NOTE 9, PAGE 166

That son of Italy who tried to blow

Giacopone di Todi

NOTE 10, PAGE 171

Recalls the obscure opposer he outweigh'd

Gilbert de la Porree, at the Council of Rheims, in 1148

NOTE 11, PAGE 172

Of that un pitying Phrygian sect which cried

The Montanists

[Note first published in 1869]

NOTE 12, PAGE 173

Monica

See St Augustine's *Confessions*, book ix, chapter 11.

[Note first published in 1869]

NOTE 13, PAGE 174

My Marguerite smiles upon the strand

See, among 'Early Poems', the poem called *A Memory-Picture*.

[Note first published in 1877]

NOTE 14, PAGE 197

The Hunter of the Tanagræan Field

Orion, the Wild Huntsman of Greek legend, and in this capacity appearing in both earth and sky

[Note first published in 1869]

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

NOTE 15, PAGE 198

O'er the sun-redden'd western straits

Erytheia, the legendary region around the Pillars of Hercules, probably took its name from the redness of the West under which the Greeks saw it

[Note first published in 1869]

NOTE 16, PAGE 255

The Scholar-Gipsy

'There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there, and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtlety of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies, and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others: that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned.'—GLANVIL'S *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661

[The passage is an abstract of Glanvil

16 'well exercised' in 1853, '54, and '57]

NOTE 17, PAGE 262

Throughout this poem there is reference to the preceding piece, *The Scholar-Gipsy*

[In 1868 'reference to another piece, *The Scholar-Gipsy*, printed in the first volume of the Author's Poems']

NOTE 18, PAGE 268

Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing

Daphnis, the ideal Sicilian shepherd of Greek pastoral poetry, was said to have followed into Phrygia his mistress Piplea, who had been

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carried off by robbers, and to have found her in the power of the king of Phrygia, Lityerses. Lityerses used to make strangers try a contest with him in reaping corn, and to put them to death if he overcame them. Hercules arrived in time to save Daphnis, took upon himself the reaping-contest with Lityerses, overcame him, and slew him. The Lityerses-song connected with this tradition was, like the Linus-song, one of the early plaintive strains of Greek popular poetry, and used to be sung by corn-reapers. Other traditions represented Daphnis as beloved by a nymph who exacted from him an oath to love no one else. He fell in love with a princess, and was struck blind by the jealous nymph Mercury, who was his father, raised him to Heaven, and made a fountain spring up in the place from which he ascended. At this fountain the Sicilians offered yearly sacrifices—See Servius, *Comment in Virgil Bucol.*, v. 20, and viii. 68.

[First published in 1869.]

NOTE 19, PAGE 274

Ah! where is he, who should have come

The author's brother, William Delafield Arnold, Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, and author of *Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East*, died at Gibraltar on his way home from India, April the 9th, 1859.

[Note first published in 1867.]

NOTE 20, PAGE 275

So moonlit, saw me once of yore

See the poem, *A Summer Night*, p. 242.

[Note first published in 1867.]

NOTE 21, PAGE 276

My brother! and thine early lot

See Note 19.

[Note first published in 1867.]

NOTE 22, PAGE 280

*I saw the meeting of two
Gifted women*

Charlotte Brontë and Harriet Martineau.

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NOTE 23, PAGE 285

Whose too bold dying song

See the last verses by Emily Brontë in *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*

[last lines (1877 and '81) *becomes* last verses (1885)]

NOTE 24, PAGE 298

Goethe, too, had been there

See *Harzreise im Winter*, in Goethe's *Gedichte*

NOTE 25, PAGE 306

The author of *Obermann*, Étienne Pivert de Senancour, has little celebrity in France, his own country, and out of France he is almost unknown. But the profound inwardness, the austere sincerity, of his principal work, *Obermann*, the delicate feeling for nature which it exhibits, and the melancholy eloquence of many passages of it, have attracted and charmed some of the most remarkable spirits of this century, such as George Sand and Sainte-Beuve, and will probably always find a certain number of spirits whom they touch and interest.

Senancour was born in 1770. He was educated for the priesthood, and passed some time in the seminary of St. Sulpice, broke away from the Seminary and from France itself, and passed some years in Switzerland, where he married, returned to France in middle life, and followed thenceforward the career of a man of letters, but with hardly any fame or success. He died an old man in 1846, desiring that on his grave might be placed these words only: *Éternité, deviens mon asile!*

The influence of Rousseau, and certain affinities with more famous and fortunate authors of his own day,—Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël,—are everywhere visible in Senancour. But though, like these eminent personages, he may be called a sentimental writer, and though *Obermann*, a collection of letters from Switzerland treating almost entirely of nature and of the human soul, may be called a work of sentiment, Senancour has a gravity and severity which distinguish him from all other writers of the sentimental school. The world is with him in his solitude far less than it is with them, of all writers he is the most perfectly isolated and the least attitudinising. His chief work, too, has a value and power of its own, apart from these merits of its author. The stir of all the main forces, by which modern life is and has been impelled, lives in the letters of *Obermann*; the dissolving agencies of

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

the eighteenth century, the fiery storm of the French Revolution, the first faint promise and dawn of that new world which our own time is ³⁰ but now more fully bringing to light,—all these are to be felt, almost to be touched, there To me, indeed, it will always seem that the impressiveness of this production can hardly be rated too high

Besides *Obermann* there is one other of Senancour's works which, for those spirits who feel his attraction, is very interesting, its title is, *Libres Méditations d'un Solitaire Inconnu*

[Note first published in 1868

l 8 whom they will touch (1868 and '69) *becomes* whom they touch (1877)

l 28 is in the letters (1868) *becomes* lives in the letters (1869)

l 31 now fully bringing (1868, '69, '77, and '81) *becomes* now more fully bringing (1885)]

NOTE 26, PAGE 306

Behind are the abandoned baths

The Baths of Leuk This poem was conceived, and partly composed, in the valley going down from the foot of the Gemmü Pass towards the Rhone

[Note first published in 1869]

NOTE 27, PAGE 312

Glion?—Ah, twenty years, it cuts

Probably all who know the Vevey end of the Lake of Geneva, will recollect Glion, the mountain-village above the castle of Chillon Glion now has hotels, *pensions*, and villas, but twenty years ago it was hardly more than the huts of Avant opposite to it,—huts through which goes that beautiful path over the Col de Jaman, followed by so many foot-travellers on their way from Vevey to the Simmenthal and Thun

[Note first published in 1868]

NOTE 28, PAGE 313

*The gentian-flower'd pass, its crown
With yellow spires aflame*

The blossoms of the *Gentiana lutea*.

[Note first published in this form in 1885 In 1867 and '68, the first line only was annotated 'The *gentiana lutea* of the Alps']

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In 1869, '77, and '81, this same line was annotated by a cross-reference to a note on *Empedocles on Etna*, Act I, scene 11, l 5]

NOTE 29, PAGE 313

And walls where Byron came

Montbovon See Byron's Journal, in his *Works*, vol III, p 258 The river Saane becomes the Sarine below Montbovon

NOTE 30, PAGE 399

And the kind, chance-arrived Wanderer

Poias, the father of Philoctetes Passing near, he was attracted by the concourse round the pyre, and at the entreaty of Hercules set fire to it, receiving the bow and arrows of the hero as his reward

[Note first published in 1885]

NOTE 31, PAGE 430

And that curst treachery on the Mount of Gore

Mount Hæmus, so called, said the legend, from Typho's blood spilt on it in his last battle with Zeus, when the giant's strength failed, owing to the Destinies having a short time before given treacherously to him, for his refreshment, perishable fruits See APOLLONORUS, *Bibliotheca*, book 1, chap VI

[Note first published in 1885]

NOTE 32, PAGE 436

Ye Sun-born Virgins! on the road of truth

See the Fragments of Parmenides

κοῦραι δ' ὁδὸν ἡγεμόνευον,
ἡλιάδες κοῦραι, πολίποῦσαι δώματα νυκτός,
εἰς φάος

[Note first published in 1867]

NOTE 33, PAGE 444

*Couldst thou no better keep, O Abbey old,
The boon thy dedication-sign foretold*

'Ailred of Rievaulx, and several other writers, assert that Sebert, king of the East Saxons and nephew of Ethelbert, founded the Abbey of Westminster very early in the seventh century.

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

'Sulcardus, who lived in the time of William the Conqueror, gives a minute account of the miracle supposed to have been worked at the consecration of the Abbey

'The church had been prepared against the next day for dedication On the night preceding, St Peter appeared on the opposite side of the water to a fisherman, desiring to be conveyed to the farther shore Having left the boat, St Peter ordered the fisherman to wait, promising him a reward on his return An innumerable host from heaven accompanied the apostle, singing choral hymns, while everything was illuminated with a supernatural light The dedication having been completed, St Peter returned to the fisherman, quieted his alarm at what had passed, and announced himself as the apostle He directed the fisherman to go as soon as it was day to the authorities, to state what he had seen and heard, and to inform them that, in corroboration of his testimony, they would find the marks of consecration on the walls of the church In obedience to the apostle's direction, the fisherman waited on Mellitus, Bishop of London, who, going to the church, found not only marks of the chrism, but of the tapers with which the church had been illuminated Mellitus, therefore, desisted from proceeding to a new consecration, and contented himself with the celebration of the mass'—DUGDALE, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (edition of 1817), vol. 1, pp 265, 266 See also MONTALEMBERT, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. III, pp 428-32

NOTE 34, PAGE 446

The charm'd babe of the Eleusinian king

Demophoön, son of Celeus, king of Eleusis See, in the *Homeric Hymns*, the *Hymn to Demeter*, 184-298

NOTE 35, PAGE 448

That Pair, whose head did plan, whose hands did forge The Temple in the pure Parnassian gorge

Agamedes and Trophonius, the builders of the temple of Apollo at Delphi See Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, c. 14.

NOTE 36, PAGE 476

Stol'n from Aristophanes

See *The Birds* of Aristophanes, 465-85

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

NOTE 37, PAGE 459

Of Robin's reed

'Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed'—BURNS, *Poor Maule's Elegy*
[Publisher's note in edition of 1890]

NOTES CANCELLED BY THE AUTHOR

The New Sirens, PAGE 26

In *Macmillan's Magazine*, December 1876, the poem was prefaced by the following note

I shall not, I hope, be supposed unconscious that in coherency and intelligibility the following poem leaves much to be desired. It was published in 1849 in a small volume without my name, was withdrawn along with that volume, and until now has never been reprinted. But the departed poem had the honour of being followed by the regrets of a most distinguished mourner, Mr Swinburne, who has more than once revived its memory, and asked for its republication. Mr Swinburne's generosity towards contemporary verse is well known, and *The New Sirens* may have won his favour the more readily because it had something, perhaps, of that animation of movement and rhythm of which his own poems offer such splendid examples. In addition to Mr Swinburne, the poem has had also several other friends, less distinguished, who desired its restoration. To a work of his youth, a work produced in long-past days of ardour and emotion, an author can never be very hard-hearted, and after a disappearance of more than twenty-five years, *The New Sirens*, therefore, is here reprinted. M A

Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann, PAGE 306

1 50 ('His quiet home one keeps') This allusion to Wordsworth was annotated in 1852, '55, and '69 'Written in November, 1849.' The footnote was dropped in 1877

Empedocles on Etna, PAGE 406

In 1867 and 1868 the poem was accompanied by the following note 'I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying that I reprint (I cannot say *republish*, for it was withdrawn from circulation before fifty copies were sold) this poem at the request of a man of genius, whom it had the honour and the good fortune to interest,—Mr Robert Browning'

Act I, scene II, l 5 ('Of the sun-loving gentian, in the heat') was, in 1877 and '81, annotated. 'The *gentiana lutea*'

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